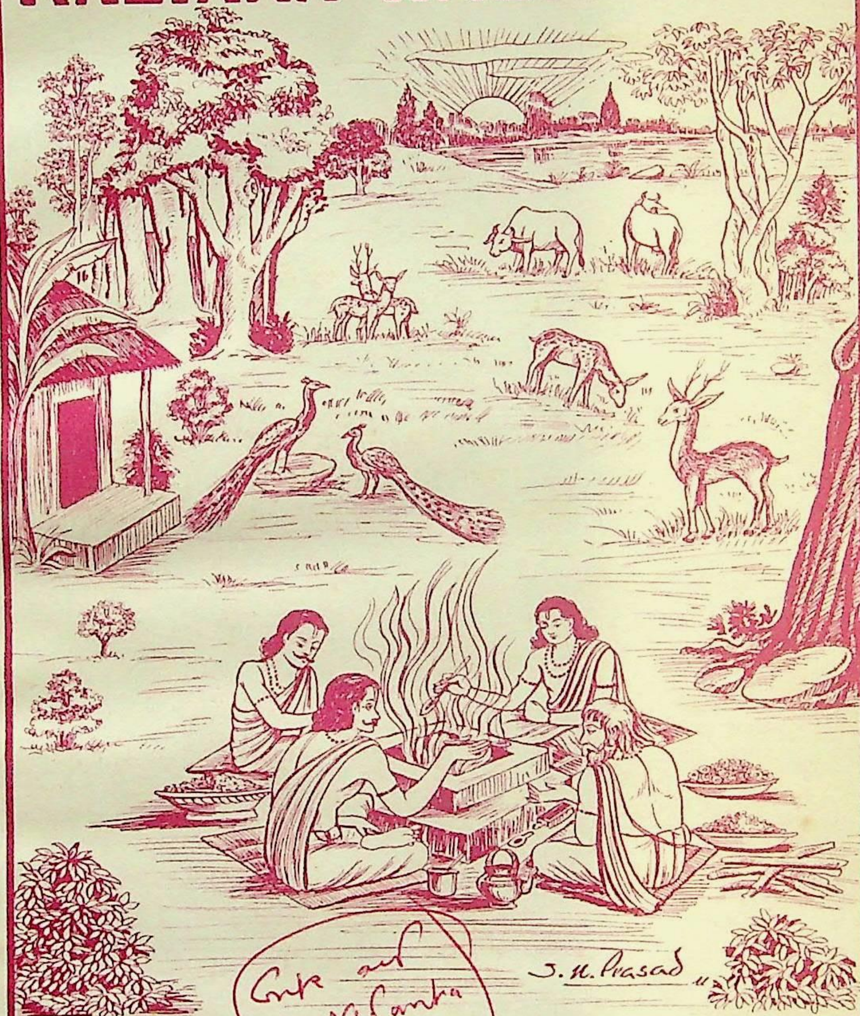
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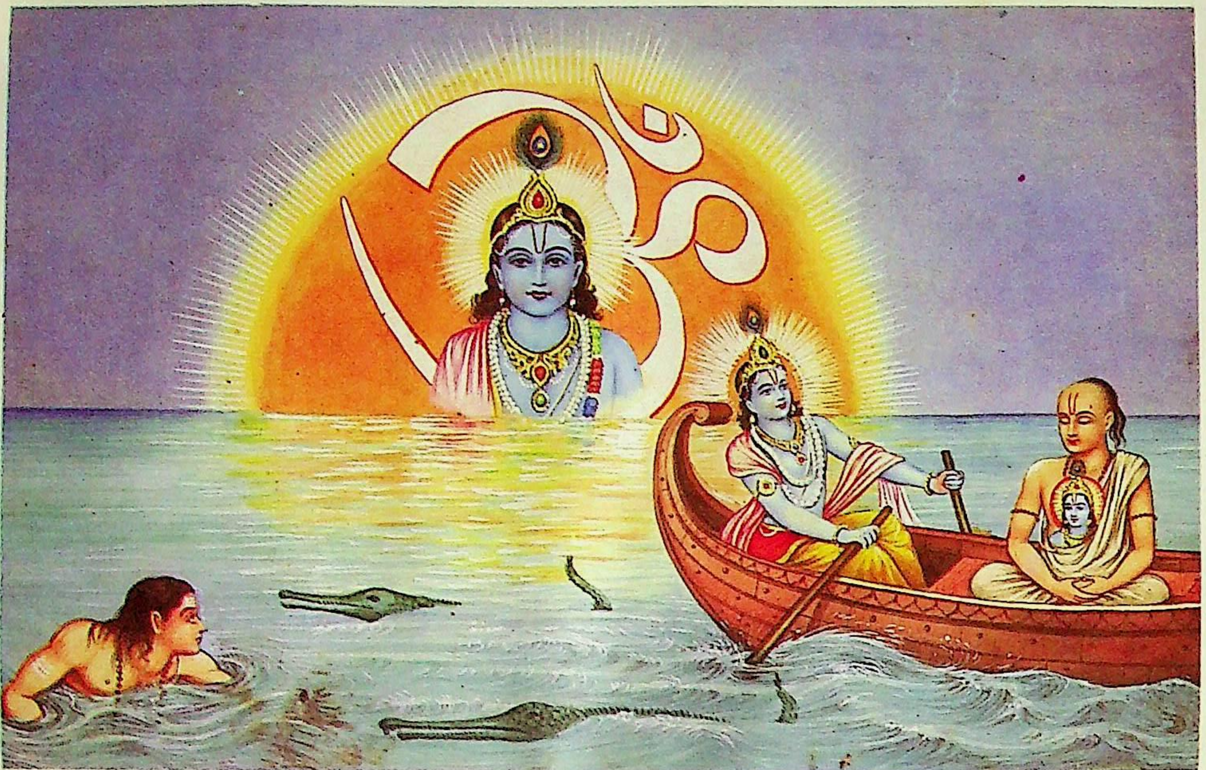
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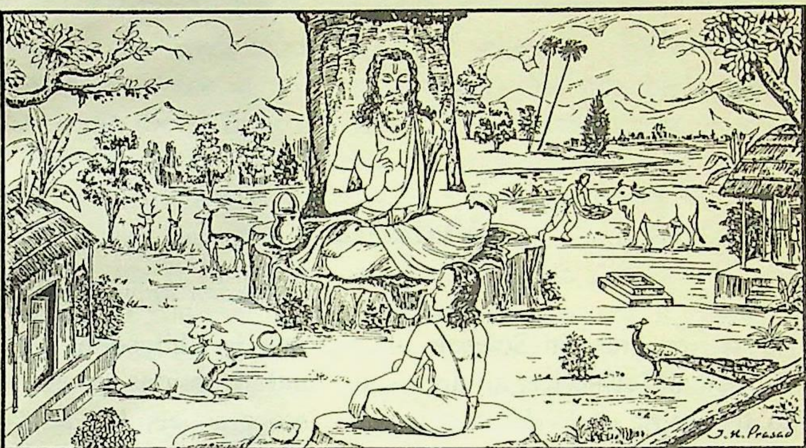
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Deliverer from the ocean of birth and death

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते। पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते॥



The KALYANA-KALPATARU

OR
THE BLISS

A MONTHLY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF SPIRITUAL IDEAS AND LOVE FOR GOD

New Series
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ये तु सर्वाणि कर्माणि मयि संन्यस्य मत्पराः।
अनन्येनैव योगेन मां ध्यायन्त उपासते॥
तेषामहं समुद्धर्ता मृत्युसंसारसागरात्।
भवामि नचिरात्पार्थ मय्यावेशितचेतसाम्॥

"Those, who depending exclusively on Me, and surrendering all actions to Me, worship Me (God with attributes), constantly meditating on Me with single-minded devotion; O Arjuna, I speedily deliver them from the ocean of birth and death, their mind being fixed on Me."

—*Gītā* (XII. 6-7)



Vedānta

—Swami Rama Tirtha

All progress in Science, all progress in Philosophy in Europe and America, all discoveries and inventions are due to the spirit of *Vedānta* being put into practice. *Vedānta* means liberty, freedom. They are due to the spirit of freedom, the spirit of liberty, the spirit of independence, the spirit of standing above bodily needs and wants. All this progress is due to that and that is *Vedānta* unconsciously put into practice. You might call it true Christianity only. True Christianity is not different from *Vedānta,* if you properly understand it. They say we have wiped slavery from the face of the earth and we have made many reforms. Rāma says, "Brothers, brothers, slavery was removed; oh, how much does Rāma wish that slavery had been removed! If we accept this statement that slavery is done away with, then the removal of slavery is not due to Christianity. If there were something in Christianity which would remove slavery, why did not Christianity remove slavery during the previous 1700 years? There was something else. People had come to America; European nations were going from place to place; they were coming in contact with other nations, they were being educated and they were being made broader-minded. This is practical *Vedānta.* That was the cause of removing slavery and not Christianity. The political and social circumstances stirred up the hearts and souls of men. If you ascribe good things to Christianity then inquisitions, the burning of witches, guillotine—and

you know what inquisition is, it reigned supreme even in San Francisco at one time, oh horrible! horrible!! taking out the blood from the breast, Rāma need not enter upon all that, to what are these to be ascribed?

One more question, "Why is India politically so low?" They say the cause of India's fall is *Vedānta.* Far from it. The cause of India's fall is lack of *Vedānta.* You know Rāma has told you that he belongs to every country. Rāma does not come as an Indian, as a Hindu—a *Vedāntist.* Rāma comes as Rāma which means all-pervading. Rāma does not want to flatter you or to flatter Indians. Rāma does not take a stand on India or America or anything; Rāma stands on "the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth" and on that ground, from that stand-point, Rāma says whatever he says. Rāma does not want to flatter India or to flatter America. The truth is that so long as *Vedānta* was prevalent among the masses of India, India was at the highest point of her glory; she reigned supreme and was prosperous. There came a time when this *Vedānta* fell into the hands of a particular class and then it was not allowed to reach the masses of India, and there began India's fall. *Vedānta* was not allowed to reach the masses; the Indian masses began to believe in a religion—"I am a slave, I am a slave, I am Thy slave, O God." This religion was imported into India from Europe. Here is a statement which will astonish the so-called historians and philosophers, which will astonish Europeans, but this is a statement which Rāma does not make without thought. That is a statement which can be proved, demonstrated with mathematical certainty. The religion which wants us to look down upon the Self and to condemn the Self and call ourselves worms, vermins, wretches, slaves, sinners, was imported into India and when it became the religion of the masses, there began the fall of India. And what about the Europeans and Americans? The Europeans

believe also in their slavery—O God, we are Thy slaves! Why did they not suffer the same degradation as the Indians suffered from the political and social stand-points of view? This will be illustrated by a story which is often referred to by naturalists and writers on evolution. They say that sometimes weakness becomes the cause of survival; it is not always the fittest that survive, *Oṁ*.

A large number of locusts was flying in a certain direction, and some of the locusts lost their wings and fell down, and the remaining locusts that were healthy went on, but when they reached a hill, the hill was on fire, and all the locusts perished. Here the weak survived and the fittest perished.

When the Indians say a thing, they mean it; they are sincere, and they make religion everything. They were the same inside and outside; when they prayed, "O God, O God, I am Thy slave, O God. I am Thy wretched slave, O God, I am a sinner." When the masses in India began to pray that way, they were sincere, and according to the law of *Karma*, the inexorable, unrelenting law of *Karma*, they had to see their own desires and wishes fulfilled; and their desires and wishes were fulfilled. They were made slaves. By whom? They were made slaves by God, you say. Has God any shape? Has God any figure? This God in His shapeless form could not come and rule them. God came. What God? The Light of lights, the White One. The White One came in the fair skin of Englishmen and made them slaves; thus it was. It was misunderstood Christianity or misunderstood Churchianity that wrought the downfall of India.

Go and see the state of affairs in India, and you will be convinced of what Rāma tells you. If you believe only what other *Swāmīs* or what other *Sādhus* of India tell you, you will be misled. The cause of India's fall is simply want of *Vedānta*. And why did not the same slavish feeling bring about the slavery of Europeans? The Europeans care more for riches than for religion. In their prayers, in their religious

matters, as was shown to you before, God is meant simply as an extra. He has to sweep and cleanse their rooms; religion was meant only to serve as a picture or portrait to decorate the drawing rooms. The prayers that came from the heart and from the real soul were not the prayers for slavery but for wealth, prosperity and worldly gain. So they rose. This is according to the law of *Karma.* History tells us that so long as *Vedānta* was prevalent among the masses of India, she was prosperous.

The Phoenicians were very powerful at one time, but could not march against India and conquer it; the Egyptians were very high, but they could not bring India under their sway. Persia reigned supreme at one time, but did no dare cast one inimical glance at India; the Romans whose eagle flew over almost all the world, the Romans who had the whole of the known earth under their sway, those Roman emperors did not dare bring India under their sway. The Greeks, when they rose to power, for centuries and centuries could not cast one evil eye upon India. There came up a man called Alexander, miscalled Alexander, the Great. He went to India. In those days the spirit of *Vedānta* was yet prevalent among the masses, it was not taken away from them. He had conquered, before going to India, the whole of the world that was known to him. The mighty Alexander who had all the Persian forces to reinforce him, had all the Egyptian forces on his side, that Alexander goes to India and is encountered and frightened by a small Indian prince called Puru. This Indian prince brought this Alexander, the Great, low, and made all his armies go away. All the forces were worsted and Alexander, the Great, was compelled to retreat. How was it? Those were the days when *Vedānta* was prevalent among the masses of India. Do you want to have proof of that? As a proof of that, read the accounts of India left by the Greeks of that day; read in History what the Greeks of that

time, the companions of Alexander, wrote about India. You will see that Practical *Vedānta* was prevalent among the masses and the people were strong. Alexander, the Great, had to turn back.

There came a time when an ordinary robber, called Mahmūd Gaznavī, seventeen times plundered India; seventeen times he took off all the wealth that he could lay his hands on from India. Read the accounts of the masses in those days, and you will see that the religion of the masses was exactly at the opposite pole to *Vedānta. Vedānta* was prevalent, but only amongst the chosen few. The masses had given it up, and thus was India brought low.

They say that you preach renunciation and renunciation must make us poor, Oh, far from it. It is true that in order to learn *Vedānta,* you have to retire into the forests you have to go into the deep recesses of the Himalayan woods. But never does *Vedānta* inculcate that you should lead the life of an ascetic. Never, never. Their retiring into the woods is just like the going of students to a college. Is it not true that in order to learn any Science or Philosophy, you should isolate yourself, you should live at a place without any harassing circumstances about you? You ought to live in a place where quietly and silently you may prosecute your studies. Thus if the Indian retires into the forest and if he goes into the woods that is simply to keep himself in such places where he may thoroughly master the Science of sciences, where he may thoroughly realize the true spirit of *Vedānta.* You know *Vedānta* is an experimental Science like chemistry. In chemistry you cannot make any progress unless you make corresponding experiments. Similarly what can a man know of *Vedānta* who does not perform spiritual experiments alongside the intellectual training that he gets! Thus in order to try these spiritual experiments and gain the intellectual knowledge, people have to retire into the forests. The forests

are like the universities and colleges. Having acquired this knowledge, they come down into the world and preach it and apply it in everyday life, and let people know how they can work this system of Philosophy into practice. They come down to teach it. You know for the five years every *Brahman* or Hindu has to pass in the forest to acquire this knowledge, and having acquired it, he has to come down into the world and work there, and some of them have to take up the ordinary worldly duties. Not everybody has to take up the order of monks after acquiring full knowledge of *Vedānta.* It is just like many a student who passes the Master of Arts examination or who takes the Doctor of Science degree, but all of them are not expected to become professors. Some become magistrates, some great merchants and some of them become professors also.

Similarly to acquire *Vedānta,* to acquire and thoroughly realize it, is to put you in a state where the whole world may become to you a heaven, a garden, where the whole universe may become to you a paradise, that life may become worth living for you. They misrepresent *Vedānta,* who say that it wants everybody to become an ascetic. No, no. The outward order of monkhood is like taking up the professor's profession after passing the Doctor of Science examination.

We see again that this *Vedānta* was preached by men who were actively engaged in worldly life. Brother! *Vedānta* is no pessimism. They misrepresent it, who say that this religion is pessimism. Far from it. It is rather the highest pinnacle of optimism.

Vedānta tells you that if you launch your body into the ocean of the world without a rudder, without a compass, without oars or without sails, without steam or electricity, you will necessarily make a shipwreck of your life. You throw yourself at the mercy of all sorts of winds and storms. *Vedānta* says that the world is full of misery and wretchedness

because of ignorance. Ignorance only is sin; ignorance is the cause of all your wretchedness. So long as you are ignorant, you are miserable; and *Vedānta* says if you remove this ignorance, if you acquire the perfect knowledge, if you know the true *Ātman,* all the dungeons become paradise for you. Life becomes worth living, never worrying, never bothering about anything, never thrown off the balance, never losing your presence of mind, never crest fallen or sad or wearing a long face. Is not that desirable? Is not that the very Truth? *Vedānta* is not pessimism. It says, "O people of the world, you are making a veritable hell of the world, you are making a vertitable hell of this world. Acquire knowledge, acquire knowledge." That is the position of *Vedānta.* No pessimism at all.

And you see, this *Vedānta* has been preached by people who lived in the world, people who were far from being ascetics; but who were still men of renunciation.

Once a great Indian prince was going to give up his worldly duties and was about to retire into the forest. His preceptor, an ancestor of this body, preached this *Vedānta* unto him, and having acquired the secret of renunciation, after becoming a true man of renunciation, lived in the world as a mighty emperor.

A great warrior, Arjuna who was the hero of the battle of Kurukshetra, was about to give up his worldly action; his duty required him to fight and he was going to give that up, he was going to retire, he was going to become an ascetic, he was about to do that and there came Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa preached *Vedānta* to Arjuna, and it is this *Vedānta* properly understood, which braced up the courage of Arjuna, which infused energy and power into him, which breathed a spirit of life and activity into him, and he rose up like a mighty lion and there he was the mighty hero.

Vedānta fills you with energy and strength and not weakness. In the *Vedas* is a passage which says that this

Ātman, this Truth can never, never be achieved by a man who is weak. It is not for the weak; the weak-hearted, the weak of body, the weak in spirit can never acquire it.

A great king gave up his kingdom and retired into the forest where he acquired true knowledge and after acquiring perfect knowledge, he went back and took possession of the throne. The throne was decorated by his presence only after he had acquired this perfect knowledge and not before.



बृहच्च तद्दिव्यमचिन्त्यरूपं
सूक्ष्माच्च तत्सूक्ष्मतरं विभाति।
दूरात्सुदूरे तदिहान्तिके च
पश्यत्स्विहैव निहितं गुहायाम्॥

"It is great and self-effulgent; and its form is unthinkable. It is subtler than the subtle. It shines diversely. It is farther away than the far-off, and It is near at hand in this body. Among sentient beings It is (perceived as) seated in this very body, in the cavity of the heart."

—*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (III. 1. 7)

यस्मात् परं नापरमस्ति किंचिद्य-
स्मान्नाणीयो न ज्यायोऽस्ति कश्चित्।
वृक्ष इव स्तब्धो दिवि तिष्ठत्येक-
स्तेनेदं पूर्णं पुरुषेण सर्वम्॥

"By that person is filled up all this, in relation to whom there is nothing superior or inferior, in comparison with whom there is nothing smaller nor greater, and who exists alone in His own effulgent glory, unmoving like a tree."

—*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (III.9)

Buddhism and the Peace Mantra

—His Holiness Swami Vidyanand Giri

While discussing the peace *'Mantra'* *"Om Pūrṇamadaḥ....* etc.," I desire to place before you the fourfold system of the atheistic philosophy of Buddhism. From this you will yourself understand whether this peace *Mantra* supports the tenets of Buddhists or not in the matters of the world and its cause and the means and the aims to be accomplished. In brief the philosophy of Buddhists can be understood from the *'Sarva Darśana Saṅgraha'*—

"Mādhyamika is the principal (most important) one. According to it the whole of world is held as the illusion of nothingness or void. According to *'Yogācāras'* the whole world is illusion of (momentary) knowledge. According to *'Sautrāntikas'*, the inference is knowledge and that is momentary. The *'Vaibhāṣikas'* say that everything is visibly momentary."

There are three different doctrines in the Buddhist philosophy viz., the theory of non-existence of everything, the theory of momentary knowledge and the theory of existence of everything. The *Sautrāntika* and the *Vaibhāṣika* schools believe that every internal and external thing is momentary. However, the existence of a thing has been established on the basis of inference by the *Sautrāntika* whereas the *Vaibhāṣika* has concluded the momentary existence of an internal and external thing on the basis of visible evidences. This is the main difference between these two schools of thought. The *Mādhyamika* (The middle way)

school has held the world as fictitious in void whereas according to the *Yogācāra* school the whole of world is illusion of the momentary knowledge. Out of these views Nihilism is considered as the principal or the most important one. The Nihilists have believed the world of action as the imaginary. They do not accept the existence of anything. Not only this but they have also given a proof of their so-called intelligence by holding even the cause as non-existent. All their arguments are like those of believers of *Brahma*. As in the *Vedānta,* the ultimate reality is only *Brahma* and only on account of not knowing Him, the world is appearing as existent, exactly in the same manner, their ultimate reality is void and this void is appearing as the world. By taking resort to Buddhist philosophy, the realization of the void will eliminate the imaginary world and void only will remain.

Such a person (Buddhist) should be asked if the imaginary world is eliminated, who will know the remaining void. Does it mean that void will know the void or will some one else know it? Everything is visionary except the void. All else, therefore, are eliminated. Moreover an imaginary thing cannot have knowledge of the real one. If it is said that the remaining void is not known, it will lead to the flaw of contradiction in statements. When void does not have existence, how can it have the power to know something? Again it is surprising that having attained void, these poor fellows hope to get liberation or salvation. The 'Undivided Existence', Knowledge and Bliss as mentioned in peace-*Mantra,* therefore, being a Complete Whole Supreme Element or Power, is the cause of the world and in this manner the world is also a complete Whole. This, however, is not accepted by these fellows who believe in 'void'. By this peace-*Mantra,* therefore Nihilism or belief in void or nothingness cannot be supported.

The believers of the theory of momentariness of knowledge while mocking at the Nihilism in the above manner have held that the momentary knowledge is the ultimate reality. Like the illusion of a snake in a piece of rope, everything of the whole of gross world, like pot, pitcher, cloth etc., is an illusion of the same. There are further two streams of that momentary knowledge—'ego consciousness' and 'worldly consciousness'. I.... is the stream of thought called, as 'ego-consciousness', whereas "This, this...." is the stream of thought known as 'worldly consciousness'. The illusions of the whole of world is contained in these. Except these, existence of nothing else is accepted by them.

Both of the above stated theories are open to objection because assumption or illusion of something arises only when the real thing also exists somewhere. There is illusion of snake in a piece of string or rope because somewhere else real snake exists. In the same manner for the illusion of the world in knowledge and void, the existence of the world somewhere has to be accepted. To this objection, their reply is that for the illusion, the existence of the world somewhere is not necessary. But, for this only the impression born of the experience of a thing is essential. It is meaningless to insist that the thing is real or false. Impressions of the experience of a prior imagined thing being existent in knowledge, fabrication or assumption of things always continues. The principles of both of these theories, therefore, are not supported by the peace-*Mantra* because both of these believe in the momentariness of knowledge and the wholeness of the world does not have any place in their faiths. As they believe in the momentariness of knowledge which is the basis of the world, its wholeness is also as false as a flower of the sky. Momentary knowledge cannot be basis of a vision or imagination. But

we do not want to discuss it here. We can only say that in the matter of cause and effect, the theories of momentariness and the theory of momentary knowledge do not get any support from this peace-*Mantra*.

In the same manner the *Sautrāntika* and the *Vaibhāṣika* sects having faith in the momentariness of the world and knowledge, are not deemed as supported by the peace-*Mantra* in the matter of cause and effect. Both of these mock at those who believe in the theory of momentary knowledge. They have asserted that for the fabrication of a form in intelligence, the existence of a thing in the outer world is essential and the assertion of those, who believe in the theory of knowledge, that without it we have the intelligence to fabricate a pot or a monastery, is not correct; but like the knowledge, the thing in the outer world also exists. On account of this both of these sects are called *'Sarvāstitvāda* or Pluralistic realism. But all these four sects taking everything to be momentary have rejected the theory of the wholeness of world and its cause. Therefore both of these sects cannot get any support from the peace-*Mantra"Om Pūrṇamadaḥ*.....etc." Gautama Buddha preached "Everything is transitory", "Everywhere there is suffering" and "The world is void", in order to gain freedom from worldly desires. But those people (his followers) who could not understand his real aim took it to be a spiritual truth and from that time the 'theory of suffering' came into existence. But our Vedantic philosophy by asserting "This is complete Whole and That is complete Whole" *(Pūrṇamadaḥ Pūrṇamidam)* supports the theory of complete Bliss and not the theory of suffering. All these four sects have supported the doctrine of *Vivartavāda* or illusionism but they do not accept that it is the alteration of *Brahma* (Supreme Spirit). They, therefore, according to their mental assumptions have called it alteration of void, alteration of momentary knowledge and like this there are

many other different types of opinions. *Bhagavatpāda* Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya, has addressed them by the word *Vaināśikas* (spiders). All of these are believers of the 'Theory of False-causationism. The only difference is that by rejecting the existence of any cause in Nihilism, they have taken the cause as naturally unreal. The believers of the theory of momentary knowledge assuming the momentary knowledge as the cause of world have believed it to be undergoing destruction every moment. They are also, therefore, considered as believers of the theory of False causationism. In the same manner believers of the *Sautrāntika* and *Vaibhāṣika* schools taking everything as impermanent have supported the theory of False causationism. In the matter of Actionism as well, all of these philosophers hold similar views. All of them have supported the theory of False causationism. But our 'peace-*Mantra*' calling the cause as well as the effect as complete Wholes, rejects all these theories. This *'Mantra'* stresses that the 'Action' is complete Whole but the 'cause is also complete Whole. The incompleteness lies in the eyes of the viewers and not in the object. On account of Eternal Ignorance the Individual Soul, duped by the fallacy of the world and such theories, has assumed the Action as incomplete.

(From his discourses)



सर्वाजीवे सर्वसंस्थे बृहन्ते अस्मिन् हंसो भ्राम्यते ब्रह्मचक्रे।
पृथगात्मानं प्रेरितारं च मत्वा जुष्टस्ततस्तेनामृतत्वमेति॥

"The individual soul, considering itself and the controller as different, revolves in this great wheel of *Brahman* that is the sustenance of all and the place of dissolution of all. When (one's Self is) adored (as identified) with Him (God), (then) thereby one attains immortality."

—*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (I. 6)

Gītā and Vedānta

—*Swami Ranganathananda*

Gītā is a continuation of the ancient philosophy that we find in the *Upaniṣads.* The *Gītā* summarizes the essential teachings of *Vedānta* and presents them in a popular manner. That is why it has become the scripture of the vast masses in this country. When we study the *Gītā,* we are not merely studying the *Upaniṣadic* philosophy, but also the ethical implications of that philosophy. We want ethical guidance, and the *Gītā* provides it. A metaphysics which speaks of the highest Reality without reference to everyday life will not be of much use to us. Therefore, the sublime ethical and practical implications of *Vedānta* are elaborated in the *Gītā.*

Apart from the ethics of conduct, there is another element in the *Gītā* which is *Bhakti,* devotion to God. The *Bhakti* of the *Gītā* is the expression of the religious mood at its highest and best. It is love of God out of the fullness of one's heart and not out of its emptiness, as it is in its early stages. It is this that makes the devotee of the *Gītā* an embodiment at once of fearlessness and gentleness. The twelfth chapter is a mighty saga in praise of the perfection of character through this path of spiritual discipline. From all these considerations, the *Gītā* has assumed an importance in our life, and that importance is increasing day by day.

Most of you must be knowing something of the *Gītā* and its place among the scriptures of the Hindus. When I use the word *Hindū* while studying *Vedānta,* I use it for want of a better word. Because, most of these scriptures

and philosophies were elaborated long before there were any other religions in the world—Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, or Muslim. These distinctions did not exist then. The great sages elaborated their concepts of religion with no such distinctions. It is necessary to keep this point in view. Today, when we use the word *Hindū,* it is to demarcate some class of people from some other classes. But when I use this word with reference to the *Gītā,* this demarcation does not exist; only because, the sages gave their sublime thoughts not to any particular class of people, Hindus as opposed to all other people, but to all the people who wanted guidance without reference to any community or race. Keeping this point in view, we have to approach these ancient books and their teachings. It is the religion of man that is taught there, and not of this community or that. Ethics, morality, and metaphysics are propagated for the welfare of humanity and not of any sections thereof.

So, when we read through the *Gītā,* we clearly find that its teachings are addressed to all humanity; to all men and women who are struggling to realize the higher expressions of their soul. This is what is given by this philosophy and religion. This ideal is also emphasized in the nature of the dialogue which is characteristic of the *Gītā.* This dialogue is between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna. In our ancient scriptures, Arjuna is considered as the incarnation of *Nara,* the archetypal Man, and Kṛṣṇa of *Nārāyaṇa*—the supreme indwelling Lord. It is not that Kṛṣṇa is imparting his teaching here to any particular sect, but to man, through his disciple, Arjuna. In the *Gītā,* therefore, God is face to face with Man—*Nārāyaṇa* with *Nara*—and this is what constitutes its solemn and sublime setting.

The *Gītā* is to be viewed in its own setting—as a commentary on *Vedānta* given by one who was universal and human, that is, Śrī Kṛṣṇa himself. Universal teachings

cannot be given by anybody but by universal men. The people in this country and outside find in the *Gītā* something which will strengthen their faith and their spiritual endeavour in their own way.Whether they be Christians or Muslims, or Hindus of various denominations, the *Gītā* intensifies their *Śraddhā* in their own faith. Its universality is of a special type. It is not an imposition, but an invitation. The *Gītā* belongs to everyone in his or her own way. Such a universal message we require to mediate between the various religions that prevail at present.

The *Vedas* teach us *Karma* or ritualistic sacrifices etc., to secure a fine place in heaven after death. Coming to the *Upaniṣads*, there is a reaction, and they have nothing to do with *Karma* or sacrifices etc. The ideal is to realize the Reality by meditation; there is no place for action. But in the *Gītā*, we find Śrī Kṛṣṇa's own reconciliation of the demand for action and the demand for thought and meditation. No life can be perfect without reconciling these two opposing forces. The man who says 'I shall act without reference to thinking' will not succeed, and the man who merely indulges in thinking without reference to action will not also be perfect. Therefore, the times demanded a synthetic philosophy, and that is what Śrī Kṛṣṇa gave in the *Bhagavad Gītā*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa gives his own meaning and interpretation, and presents a constructive philosophy which reconciles the claims of action and thought. This we find specially in his interpretation of action and inaction in the fourth and eighteenth chapters.

We want the guidance of philosophy so that life may be lifted up to a higher level. The aim of the *Gītā* is to lift up life from the ordinary to a higher level of ethical and moral values and place it under the guidance of a sublime philosophy.

The second chapter gives us the whole scheme of the philosophy of life as conceived by the *Bhagavad Gītā*. This

and philosophies were elaborated long before there were any other religions in the world—Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, or Muslim. These distinctions did not exist then. The great sages elaborated their concepts of religion with no such distinctions. It is necessary to keep this point in view. Today, when we use the word *Hindū*, it is to demarcate some class of people from some other classes. But when I use this word with reference to the *Gītā*, this demarcation does not exist; only because, the sages gave their sublime thoughts not to any particular class of people, Hindus as opposed to all other people, but to all the people who wanted guidance without reference to any community or race. Keeping this point in view, we have to approach these ancient books and their teachings. It is the religion of man that is taught there, and not of this community or that. Ethics, morality, and metaphysics are propagated for the welfare of humanity and not of any sections thereof.

So, when we read through the *Gītā*, we clearly find that its teachings are addressed to all humanity; to all men and women who are struggling to realize the higher expressions of their soul. This is what is given by this philosophy and religion. This ideal is also emphasized in the nature of the dialogue which is characteristic of the *Gītā*. This dialogue is between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna. In our ancient scriptures, Arjuna is considered as the incarnation of *Nara*, the archetypal Man, and Kṛṣṇa of *Nārāyaṇa*—the supreme indwelling Lord. It is not that Kṛṣṇa is imparting his teaching here to any particular sect, but to man, through his disciple, Arjuna. In the *Gītā*, therefore, God is face to face with Man—*Nārāyaṇa* with *Nara*—and this is what constitutes its solemn and sublime setting.

The *Gītā* is to be viewed in its own setting—as a commentary on *Vedānta* given by one who was universal and human, that is, Śrī Kṛṣṇa himself. Universal teachings

cannot be given by anybody but by universal men. The people in this country and outside find in the *Gītā* something which will strengthen their faith and their spiritual endeavour in their own way. Whether they be Christians or Muslims, or Hindus of various denominations, the *Gītā* intensifies their *Śraddhā* in their own faith. Its universality is of a special type. It is not an imposition, but an invitation. The *Gītā* belongs to everyone in his or her own way. Such a universal message we require to mediate between the various religions that prevail at present.

The *Vedas* teach us *Karma* or ritualistic sacrifices etc., to secure a fine place in heaven after death. Coming to the *Upaniṣads*, there is a reaction, and they have nothing to do with *Karma* or sacrifices etc. The ideal is to realize the Reality by meditation; there is no place for action. But in the *Gītā*, we find Śrī Kṛṣṇa's own reconciliation of the demand for action and the demand for thought and meditation. No life can be perfect without reconciling these two opposing forces. The man who says 'I shall act without reference to thinking' will not succeed, and the man who merely indulges in thinking without reference to action will not also be perfect. Therefore, the times demanded a synthetic philosophy, and that is what Śrī Kṛṣṇa gave in the *Bhagavad Gītā*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa gives his own meaning and interpretation, and presents a constructive philosophy which reconciles the claims of action and thought. This we find specially in his interpretation of action and inaction in the fourth and eighteenth chapters.

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The second chapter gives us the whole scheme of the philosophy of life as conceived by the *Bhagavad Gītā*. This

is how the *Upaniṣadic* thought developed and evolved till it found a new and original formulation by Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā.* As a friend, philosopher, and guide of humanity, Śrī Kṛṣṇa gave his message of a lofty metaphysics and practical ethics which has sustained and will continue to sustain humanity through the ages.

The *Gītā* belongs to the *Mahābhārata,* which records events that happened in India about the fourteenth century B.C. This is the conclusion that modern scholars have arrived at. Whatever be the precise date, there is no doubt that it is very ancient.

The thoughts proceeding from the *Vedas* and the *Upaniṣads,* reinforced by the ideas of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Buddha, Śaṅkara, and others, have provided the basic inspiration to our cultural values, loyalty to which has been responsible for the continued vitality of our people and our culture. As a people, we had our ups and downs—no progress is continuous—everywhere there have been ups and downs. But the peculiar fact about India is that, whereas others fall and never rise again, we fall and rise again; whereas others live and die and never rise again, India only seems to die and rise again rejuvenated, more glorious than before.

Any culture is said to be living when it overflows. Expansion is life and contraction is death. For the last thousand years, we were greeting death; we were building narrow walls around ourselves. But, then, since the last hundred years, we have broken through these narrow walls; we are now facing the world and spreading our ideas in distant parts of the globe. It is the same ancient people and the same ancient culture, but rejuvenated and strengthened. This is significant. Whereas other countries make noise and go to sleep to die away, we but go to sleep to rise again to face the world with renewed vigour.

Take our history; what do we find there? We find a

great man rising about every thousand years. Each of them comes to renew the vigour of the same ancient ideals, may be with a little different emphasis according to the needs of the time. That is why there is an unbroken continuity of our culture. India has survived many a vicissitude. This must make us humble. Let it be constantly kept in view that our culture is preserved because of these great personalities, whom we look upon as *Avatāras* or incarnations of God. Whatever be the attitude we take with regard to these great men, whether as *Avatāras* or otherwise, they come when the national life is at its lowest ebb, and their touch breathes a new life into the almost dead bones and muscles of the nation. God alone can give life; call them God or Godmen, they breathe life into the dead bones and muscles of the people. One such great man is Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa was a dynamic personality and his teachings also are dynamic; they are a mass of strength-giving ideas. We have to understand this Kṛṣṇa. Up-till now, we have had only the Kṛṣṇa who evoked our tears and our softer sides. But the Kṛṣṇa of the *Gītā* comes to lift up a people and make them dynamic.

The *Upaniṣads* and the *Gītā* speak only of strength. When we develop a little strength and vigour in ourselves, we shall find in the *Gītā* something that will stand us in every situation of life.

Vedānta says that infinite resources are there in every individual; man is potentially divine, but he has to tap his inner resources; and a great teacher has the power to bring out this potential capacity from out of himself as well as from others. By the mere touch of a great teacher, we begin to manifest great energy and power, of which we were not even conscious before. Śrī Kṛṣṇa gave that magic touch to Arjuna and through him to all the humanity.

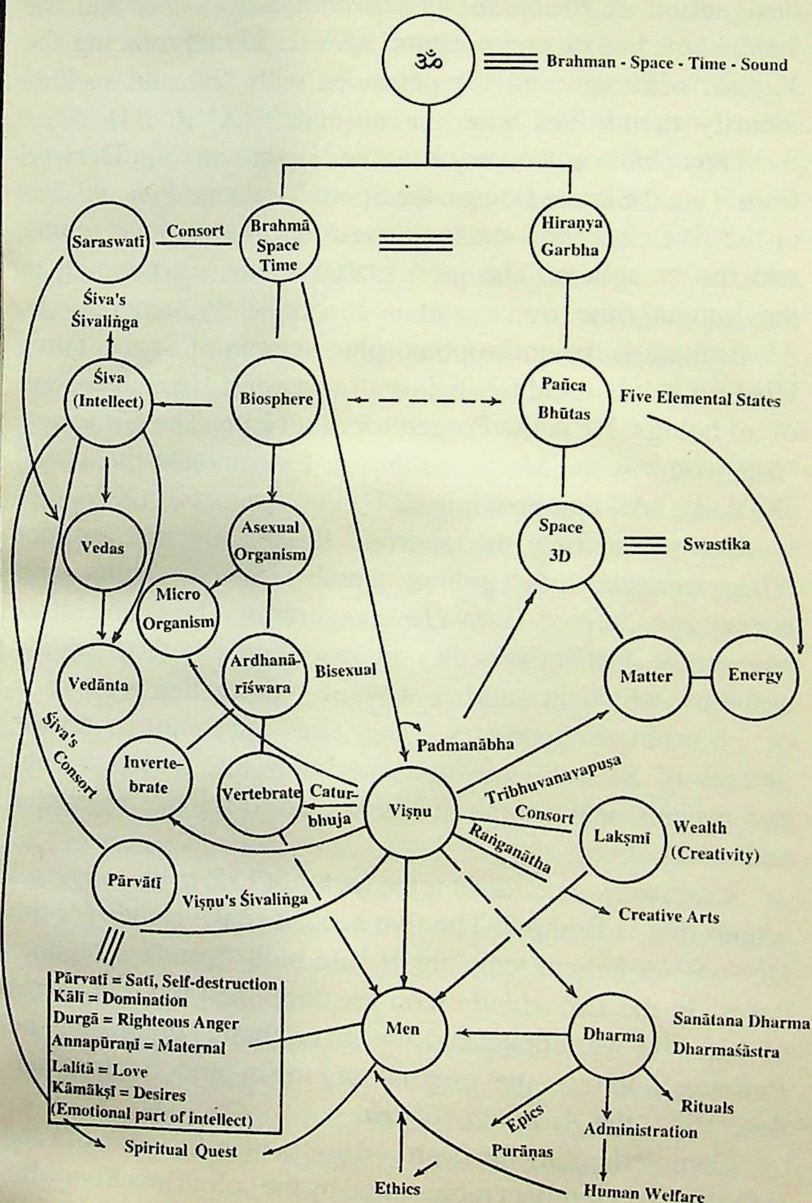


Oṁ—The Matrix of Hindu Worship

—*S. K. Balasubramanian*

The plurality and catholicity of the Hindus are derived from their system of worship. Though the gods are many, they owe their origin to a single entity, leading to a combination of *Advaita* and apparent Polytheism. The Hindu gods are neither competitive nor demand exclusivity. They are complementary to each other and contribute to human welfare in their different ways. The bottom line is creative evolution in the positive sense and prevention of regression in the negative. The attributes of different gods are meant to serve these purposes.

The singular entity from which every being, living and inert, is derived, is given the title *Oṁ* symbolically represented as 'ॐ'. The logo has five elements: the three convergent curved limbs representing the three dimensions of Space, or the three axes of co-ordinate geometry (the x,y,z axes); the unconnected crescent is the time component which is part of a continuum known to science as Space-Time. Still another component, the background noise, corresponding to 3K, uniformly pervading the universe provides the fifth dimension to the universe which is not fully understood in science. It is not also sensibly described in the scriptures though it is known as *Nāda-Brahman. Oṁ* is thus the Space-Time-Sound of science. It is the *Brahman* of the *Advaita* philosophers. Everything in the universe is part of *Oṁ. Taittirīya Upaniṣad* asserts: "*Oṁ* is *Brahman; Oṁ* is everything."


ॐ
Brahman - Space - Time - Sound
Saraswatī
Consort
Brahmā Space Time
Hiraṇya Garbha
Śiva's Śivaliṅga
Śiva (Intellect)
Biosphere
Pañca Bhūtas
Five Elemental States
Vedas
Asexual Organism
Space 3D
Swastika
Micro Organism
Vedānta
Ardhanā-rīśwara
Bisexual
Matter
Energy
Śiva's Consort
Padmanābha
Inverte-brate
Vertebrate
Catur-bhuja
Viṣṇu
Tribhuvanavapuṣa
Consort
Lakṣmī
Wealth (Creativity)
Raṅganātha
Pārvatī
Viṣṇu's Śivaliṅga
Creative Arts
Pārvatī = Sati, Self-destruction
Kālī = Domination
Durgā = Righteous Anger
Annapūraṇī = Maternal
Lalitā = Love
Kāmākṣī = Desires
(Emotional part of intellect)
Men
Dharma
Sanātana Dharma
Dharmaśāstra
Rituals
Epics
Administration
Purāṇas
Spiritual Quest
Ethics
Human Welfare

The *Gītā* echoes the statement: "*Oṁ Tat Sat* is the triple designation of *Brahman*. The *Brāhmaṇas, Vedas* and the *Yajñas* are but its components" (XVII. 23). "Prefacing the *Yajñas*, offerings and the penances with *Oṁ*, the seekers identify themselves with the ultimate" (XVII. 24).

Thus *Oṁ* is at the very heart of Hindu worship. Derived from it are the lesser Beings: the Space-Time, the *Pañcabhūtas* or the five elemental states, lower order Space, inert matter and the biosphere. The inert matter seems unchanging in the human time frame and is incompletely understood.

Brahmā is the anthropomorphic version of Space-Time. His four heads stand for its four dimensions. He is the origin of all beings. He is the Progenitor of all Life. The *Gītā* says: "My womb is the *Mahat Brahman*. I inseminate the same" (XIV. 3). "All beings originate by that (process)" (XIV. 4).

Complementing the android *Brahmā* is the abstract *Hiraṇyagarbha* (the golden womb). Space, matter and energy are derived from *Hiraṇyagarbha*. These are inter-convertible. Collectively they are represented by the *Swaśtika* emblem, which is another way of writing the x,y,z axes of co-ordinate geometry. The two dimensional mirror images of *Swastika* are nonsuperimposable and represent two aspects of the same reality known to science as matter and antimatter.

Viṣṇu as *Padmanābha* is the foetus of Life in the universal womb that is Brahmā. The five headed snake stands for the DNA-RNA helical template of Life built from five organic bases. In the *Caturbhuja* icon are combined the two forms of Life, the vertebrate and the invertebrate. Preceding the *Padmanābha* are the asexual organism and its bisexual derivative, the *Ardhanārīśwara*.

Complementing the flesh and bones manifestation of Life is the abstract intellect represented by the colourless Śiva who is worshipped as only a symbol, the *Liṅga*. His sibling Saraswatī

is the consort of Brahmā stressing the importance of abstract intellect in Creation and its parity to the Progenitor.

The transparent abstract intellect is supplemented by the darker emotional side, represented by Pārvatī, the sibling of the blue black Viṣṇu. She is the only goddess who displays the entire range of human emotions: the maternal and the supportive instinct as Annapūraṇī; the carnal and the familial as Lalitā, Kāmākṣī and Mīnākṣi; the drive for dominance as Kālī; the righteous anger as Durgā and at last the self-destructive syndrome as Satī. Śiva and Pārvatī provide a complete picture of the cerebral processes: the instincts, the emotions and the abstract quest for knowledge which underlies scientific research and the spiritual inquiries.

Viṣṇu as Raṅganātha embodies the performing arts, music, dance and the creative skills like painting. He is the master of Life, the royal personage who governs human society. He is the embodiment of *Dharma,* the divine edict. Viṣṇu as the *Avatāra Puruṣa* represents evolution of Life from primitive forms to the human and beyond. His *Avatāras* trace the course of Darwinian evolution and at the same time lay down the ethics governing human evolution.

Viṣṇu as *Caturbhuja* is the acme of creation. He stands at the evolutionary peak and manifests as Kṛṣṇa the joy of life; as Rāma the disciplinarian; as *Kūrma* the foundation of human prosperity; as *Matsya* the evolutionary origins; as Narasiṁha the destroyer of the wicked and as *Vāmana* the instrument to subdue the regressive human instincts such as pride and possessiveness.

Whether one worships Śiva, Viṣṇu or their consorts or other gods, the obeisance is to the ultimate *Brahman.* "As all the waters falling from the skies reach the ocean" every form of worship is centred on the *Brahman* that is *Om.*



An Introduction to the Historicity of Vedantic Studies in India

—*R. C. M. Tripathi*

It is almost impossible to say when and how Vedantic thinking gained ground in India. There is a very long list of ancient *Ācāryas* who were somehow or the other related to Vedantic movement. Their works, if any, are not available at present. But we do find their names referred to by the posterity of the *Ācāryas* in their works either to draw support for their own views or to falsify them.

In *Upaniṣads* we find scattered different expressions which inspired several *Ācāryas* to build up their own theories and find suitable answers to the puzzling questions in connection with *Jagat, Jīva, Brahma* etc. Yet *Upaniṣads* do not present one complete holistic picture of the philosophical principles.

On theistic non-dualism we find for the first time the *Brahmasūtra* known as *Vedānta Sūtra* and *Śārīraka Sūtra* by Bādarāyaṇa Vyāsa. It is perhaps a milestone in the non-dualistic thinking. The first systematised treatise of philosophical nature. In the same manner for the first time Śrī Bhagawatpāda Ādi Śaṅkarācārya wrote his *Śārīraka Bhāṣya* most systematically but with the sole purpose of getting the strong support for his theories of *Māyā* and *Vivarta*—falsity of the world and identity between *Jīva* and *Brahma.* Prior to him perhaps no body appended such an exhaustive note.

Śaṅkarācārya is supposed to be a disciple of Śrī Govind Bhagawatpāda who was second to *Ācārya* Gauḍa Pāda in the lineage. It will not be unreasonable to suppose

that his foregoing *Ācāryas* knew and preached the Vedantic principles in their own way. Unfortunately we do not have anyway to know what they taught.

In the *Mantra* 'द्वासुपर्णा' *Upaniṣad* recognises three entities—two birds and the third *Pīpala* fruits. Śaṅkarācārya refused to acknowledge any existence of the *Pīpala* tree and declared the two birds to be one and the same. Regarding the reality of the world he simply said that it is all appearance like blue colour in the sky.

Śaṅkarācārya acknowledged only one cause—the efficient cause. Prior to him there were some who regarded three causes while others acknowledged only two—efficient and material. The example of the spider made his antagonists speechless.

The questions which puzzled the other scholors did not stand before him. For example in an earthen pitcher we find the quality and form of the earth and not the potter. So those scholors had an absolute requirement of at least two causes. But since Śaṅkara refused the very existence of the earth, so to him there was the potter alone.

In the lineage of Śaṅkarācārya though not exactly his disciples, there were some other prominent teachers who propagated the principles of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya. They were—Padma Pāda, Maṇḍana Miśra, Vācaspati Miśra and others who propagated *Adwaitism* to the best of their ability.

Viśiṣṭādwaita of Rāmānuja:

Much before the advent of Rāmānuja; perhaps even before Śaṅkarācārya or quite possibly much before that there were thinkers or more correctly to say the intuiters who had been thinking on mystic patterns and were propagating devotional surrender to the so-called immutable *Brahma* of the *Upaniṣads.* It is quite probable that Śrīnātha Muni and Yāmunācārya were not the first ones who invented the theory of *Prapatti.* It must have been continuing in some form howsoever crude it was. The books like

'सिद्धित्रयम्' or 'यतिपतिमतदीपिका' do not spring up all of a sudden and they require substantial background.

However it was Rāmānuja in the 11th century A.D., who erected a grand and splendid philosophical structure of *Viśiṣṭādwaita* cult. None of these *Ācāryas* and many others could adjust their intuitional and intellectual findings with the dogmas and principles established by the non-dualists.

Unlike Śaṅkarācārya Rāmānuja did not take the world to be unreal and false; nor like a mirage or a dream. To him the world was very much real—the insentient body of the sentient *Brahma*. He recognised the reality of three things—*Cit, Acit* and *Cidcidviśiṣṭa*. It is said in the *Gītā:*

यस्मात्क्षरमतीतोऽहमक्षरादपि चोत्तमः।
अतोऽस्मि लोके वेदे च प्रथितः पुरुषोत्तमः॥

"As I transcend the perishable and am even higher than the imperishable, I am declared to be the Supreme Person in 'he world and in the *Vedas."*

(XV. 18)

According to Rāmānuja *Cit (Jīva), Acit* (matter) are the body of the Supreme and the Supreme is the holder of the body *(Śarīra-Śarīrī)*. The Supreme is at the same time *Cit, Acit* and also superior to both. Side by side He is *Cit, Acit,* both and above and beyond both. That is *Cidcidviśiṣṭa.*

Prapatti (absolute surrender and absolute dependence on the Supreme) is the only path to realise Him. Unlike Śaṅkara *Jīva* with Rāmānuja is always different from the Supreme. Even the liberated souls do not merge with the Supreme like drop with the ocean. They get only proximity of the Lord. That is *Mokṣa* of *Viśiṣṭādwaita.*

Afterwards Śrī Vaiṣṇava school of Rāmānuja was forked in *Tena-Kalai* and *Vadagalai. Vadagalai* was established by Vedānta Deśika.

Dwaita of Madhwācārya:

Madhwācārya was born in 1199 A.D. It was a time when

there was a tussle between the followers of Śaṅkarācārya and those of the *Pāñcarātra Āgamas*. Rāmānuja was to a considerable extent influenced by Śaṅkarācārya but Madhwācārya rejected outright the *Adwaita* of Śaṅkarācārya. It appears that his findings were based on *Purāṇas* more than the Vedic literature. However *Jīva* and *Brahma* to Madhwa are entirely different and independent entities. The relation between them is that of master and servant. As per Mādhwa thinking the servant can never be identical with the master. Rāmānuja established *Śarīrī—Śarīra Bhāva* whereas Madhwācārya propounded *Swatantrāswatantra Bhāva*. In his system there is a hierarchy of superior and inferior gods and goddesses who are subsequently divided into two groups independent and dependent. Independent is only Śrī Hari. Even Lakṣmī, who stands next to Śrī Hari is not independent. The *Jīva* is *Aswatantra*. Its supreme duty is to propitiate Śrī Hari and get salvation. Salvation means attainment of devotion to the lotus feet of Śrī Hari. Neither the *Adwaitika* merger nor the *Viśiṣṭādwaitika* proximity. It will not be incorrect if we say that Madhwa's philosophy is a theological philosophy of a specific *Vaiṣṇava* cult.

Apart from these few philosophical schools based on *Vedānta* there have been some more who mainly defined and explained the relation between *Brahma, Jīva* and *Jagat*. The *Bhedābheda Vāda* of Bhāskara and *Dwaitādwaita Vāda* of Nimbārka are a few of them. As a matter of fact this type of thinking continued till Ballabhācārya and then through Rāmānanda, Kabīra, Tulasī etc., it came down to Ācārya Vinobā Bhāve till very recently. Kabīra, Tulasī etc., were not *Ācāryas* yet they had their own independent views.



Tat Tvam Asi

—Dr. Mukunda Pati Tripathi

The radiant rays of the morning sun were illumining the entire forest. They were lending a special splendour to the small hut of sage *Uddālaka!* A sweet, soothing breeze was sweeping every nook and corner of the *Āśrama.* It was whistling too, as it were, making the people all-alert.

The aged *Ṛṣi* offered his oblations in the sacred fire. A fine glow of sweet contentment ran through his face. He felt quite zealous, jovial and easy. After a shortwhile, he summoned his son, 'Śvetaketu,' who was a lad of about 12 years. Śvetaketu approached him. He prostrated himself before his father in the posture of *Sāṣṭāṅga Praṇāma.* The father raised him up, smelt his head, patted on his back and said, "Dear Śveta. You've attained 12 years of age, befitting you to pursuit for knowledge. Ours has been a glorious tradition. You must follow the path of our ancestors. Go to *Gurukula* and acquire knowledge infinite."

The child Śvetaketu, obeying his behest, went to a *Gurukula* and studied attentively for complete 12 years. He read the *Vedas,* phonetics, ceremonials, Grammar, Etymology, Meter and Astronomy. When he returned to his father's hut after completing education, his face was beaming with a new joy, purity and the glow of *Tapa* and *Svādhyāya.* The joy of having attained knowledge desirable, the joy of having attained the aim of his life, the joy of seeing his parents after a long period of time. As he reached the hut, his heart rippled with myriad emotions. He showed his due respect to his

father, who felt proud of him, because now, his affectionate son had bloomed into a full grown man; strong and sturdy; hale and hearty, prompt and promising.

After a few days' rest by Śvetaketu, the wise father wanted to test his abilities. He posed before him a question—"O dear son! have you acquired an authentic knowledge of that basic knowledge by which we hear the unhearable, perceive the unperceivable and know the unknowable?" "येनाश्रुतः श्रुतं भवत्यमतं मतमविज्ञातं विज्ञातमिति।" (*Chāndogyopaniṣad* VI. 1.3). The young *Brahmacārī* had mastered various *Vidyās* as yet, but he found himself at bay at the querry of his father. He had chanted *Mantras* no doubt, but the real purport of those was far beyond his ken and grasp.

In a modest tone, he admitted his ignorance in that branch of knowledge and beseeched him to throw light on the same. A streak of smile ran through the lips of his father and he spoke in a serene, grave tone—'Dear child! as by knowing a lump of clay all things made of clay are known, the difference being only in name and arising from speech and the truth being that all are clay: as by knowing one nugget of gold, all things made of gold are known, the difference being only in name and arising from speech; The truth being that all are gold—exactly so is the knowledge, knowing which one knows all. "Father dear! surely those venerable teachers of mine might not have been proficient in this basic knowledge; otherwise they might have initiated me in this branch of knowledge." "Would you kindly explain it full well?" The father nodded in accent. He spoke "Be it so" and continued—In the beginning there was existence one only without a second. Some say that in the beginning there was non-existence only and out of that the universe was born. How could non-existence breed existence?" No my son! In the beginning

there was existence alone the only one without a second. He the one, thought to himself. Let me be many, let me grow forth. "सत्वेव सौम्येदमग्र आसीदेकमेवाद्वितीयम्। तदैक्षत् बहु स्याम्।"

(*Chāndogyopaniṣad* VI. 2-3)

"Thus out of himself, He projected the universe, He entered into every being and everything. All that is, has its self in 'Him' alone. He is the truth. He is the subtle essence of all. He is the self and that Śvetaketu, That art Thou.

"Won't you tell me something more sir?"

"Be it so, my child!"

"As the bees make honey by gathering juices from many flowering plants and trees and as these juices reduced to one honey, do not know from what flowers they severally came, My son! all creatures, when they are merged in that one existence, whether in dreamless sleep or in death, know nothing of their past or present state, because of the ignorance enveloping them know not that they are merged in 'Him' and that from Him they come! Whatever these creatures are, whether a lion, or a tiger or a boar, or a worm, or a gnat, or a mosquito, that they still are when they come back from dreamless sleep". "All these have their sleep in him alone. He is the truth. He is the subtle essence of all. He is the self and that Śvetaketu, art Thou."

"Please tell me sir, more about this self."

"Be it so my son!"

"The rivers in the east flow eastward the rivers in the west flow westward and all enter into the sea. From sea to sea, they pass, the clouds lifting them to the sky as vapour and sending them down as rain. And as these rivers, when they are united with the sea, do not know whether they are this or that river. Likewise all those creatures that I have named, when they have come back from *Brahman*, know not whence they came. All those beings have their

self in Him alone. He is the truth. He is the subtle essence of all. He is the self and that art Thou."

"Please tell me something more sir!"

"Be it so my child!"

"If someone were to strike once at the root of this large tree, it would bleed but live. If he were to strike at its stem it would bleed but live. If he were to strike at the top it would bleed but live. Pervaded by the living self, the tree stands firm and takes its food; but if the self were to depart from one of its branches, that branch would wither; if it were to depart from a second that would wither; if it were to depart from a third, that would wither. If it were to depart from the whole tree, the whole tree would wither."

"Likewise, my son! know this; the body dies when the soul leaves it but the self does not die. All that is, has its self in Him alone. He is the truth. He is the subtle essence of all. He is the self and that, Śvetaketu, that art Thou."

"Please tell me something more sir!" about this self.

"Be it so. Bring a fruit of that tall Nyagrodha tree."

"Here it is, sir!"

"Break it."

"It's broken sir!"

"What do you see?"

"Some seeds sir!"

"Break one of them."

"It's broken sir!"

"What do you see?"

"Nothing sir!"

The subtle essence you do not see and in that is the whole of the Nyagrodha tree. Believe my son! That that which is the subtle essence—in that have all things their existence. That is the truth. That is the Self. That Śvetaketu, art Thou."

"Please tell me something more about this sir!"

Be it so! Put this salt in water and come to me tomorrow

morning. Śvetaketu acted accordingly. The next morning, his father asked him to bring the salt, which he had put in the water. But he could not, for it had been dissolved. Then Uddālaka said—

"Sip the water and tell me how it tastes."

"It's salty sir!"

"In the same way" continued Uddālaka—"Though you do not see *Brahman* in this body; He is indeed here. That which is the subtle essence in that have all things their existence. That is the truth. That is the self and that, Śvetaketu, art Thou."

"Please tell me something more about this, sir!"

"Be it so my child!"

"As a man may be blindfolded and left away after being led away into a strange place; and as having been so dealt with he turns in every direction and cries out for someone to remove his bondages and show him the way home; and as thus entreated someone may loose his bondages and give him comfort; and as thereupon, he walks from village to village asking his way as he goes and arrives home at last. Just so does a man; who meets with an illumined teacher, obtain true knowledge."

"That which is the subtle essence—in that have all beings their existence. That is the truth. That is the self and That Śvetaketu, art Thou."

"Please tell me something more about this self sir!"

"When a man is fatally ill, his relatives gather round him and ask, "Do you know me? Do you know me? Now until his speech is merged in his mind, his mind in his breath, his breath in his vital heat, his vital heat in the supreme being, then he does not know them."

"That which is the subtle essence in that have all things their existence. That is the truth. That is the self and That Śvetaketu, art Thou.

स य एषोऽणिमैतदात्म्यमिदः सर्वं तत्सत्यः स आत्मा तत्त्वमसि श्वेतकेतो इति।

(*Chāndogyopaniṣad* VI. 14.3)

Young Śvetaketu bowed before his father. A new vista had been opened before him. All things seemed to wear quite a new look. The *Ṛṣi* kept silent and the birds sitting on the twigs of trees twittered in gratitude.



यस्मान्नोद्विजते लोको लोकान्नोद्विजते च यः।
हर्षामर्षभयोन्मुक्तः स जीवन्मुक्त उच्यते॥

"He by whom people are not agitated and who is not agitated by people, and who is free from joy, anger and fear, is called *Jīvanmukta*" (*Gītā* XII. 15).

—*Yogavāsiṣṭha*

तानु तत्र मृत्युर्यथा मत्स्यमुदके परिपश्येदेवं पर्यपश्यदृचि साम्नि यजुषि। ते नु विदित्वोर्ध्वा ऋचः सामनो यजुषः स्वरमेव प्राविशन्।

"As somebody sees a fish in water, similarly, death saw them there in the *Ṛk, Sāma* and *Yajus*. They also, having known this, went up from *Ṛk, Sāma, Yajus* and surely entered only into the vowel *(Om)*."

—*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (I. 4. 3)

समाने वृक्षे पुरुषो निमग्नोऽ-
नीशया शोचति मुह्यमानः।
जुष्टं यदा पश्यत्यन्यमीश-
मस्य महिमानमिति वीतशोकः॥

"On the same tree, the individual soul remains drowned (i.e., stuck), as it were; and so it moans, being worried by its impotence. When it sees thus the other, the adored Lord, and His glory, then it becomes liberated from sorrow."

—*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (III. 1. 2)

Quintessence of Vedānta

—R. Sridharan

According to Śrī Madhva (1238—1317 AD) the *Vedānta* teaches about the one and the only independent transcendent cum immanent reality which controls all the dependent finite realities. The world of finite realities—the matter and the souls—is given just what is its due and nothing more. They are not independent ('They' means inanimate matter and animate souls). God or the Highest Being the one and the only Independent Being is greater than His creation of dependent categories and is immanent in them. When Śrī Madhva propounded the existence of subordinate reals, side by side with the independence of *Brahman,* he has expounded the *Tattva Vāda* philosophy (Theistic, Realistic and Pluralistic philosophy) when we think of the transcendence of *Brahman* and isolate it from everything else. We may not sometimes resort to the "language of monism." Such according to Śrī Madhva is the summit level of Upanishadic thought or Vedantic thought.

Śrī Jaya Tīrtha (1365—1388 A.D.) the greatest commentator of Madhva *Granthas* has expounded the ultimate synthesis of Upanishadic thought with his characteristic clarity and brilliance as follows in his *magnum opus Nyāya Sudhā.*

सर्वाण्यपि हि वेदान्तवाक्यानि असंख्येयकल्याणगुणाकरं सकलदोषगंधविधुरं एकरूपमेव परं ब्रह्म प्रतिपादयन्ति। किन्तु (१) कानिचित् सर्वज्ञत्व सर्वेश्वरत्व सर्वान्तर्यामित्व सौन्दर्य औदार्यादि गुण विशिष्टतया (२) कानिचित् अपहतपाप्मत्व निर्दुःखत्व भौतिकदेहरहितत्वादिदोषाभावाविशिष्टतया (३) कानिचिदतिगहनता ज्ञापनाय अवाङ्मनसगोचरत्वाकारेण (४) कानिचित्

सर्व परित्यागेन तस्यैवोपादानायाद्वितीयत्वेन (५) कानिचित् सर्वसत्ताप्रतीतिप्रवृत्तिनिमित्तता प्रतिपत्त्यर्थं सर्वात्मकत्वेन इत्येवमाद्यनेक प्रकारैः परम पुरुषं बोधयंति। ततो व्याकुलबुद्धयो गुरु संप्रदाय विकलाः सर्वत्राप्येकरूपतामननुसन्दधाना वेदं चिन्दन्ति॥

All Upanishadic texts without exception speak of the glory of *Brahman* as the abode of infinite perfections and attributes and free from all imperfections. Of these some—(1) Represent it as endowed with attributes like omniscience, Lordship, inner rulership, munificence, beauty, goodness etc. (2) Others, represent it as free from all such limitations as sin, suffering, liability to physical embodiment and so on (3) Yet others describe *Brahman* in order to bring home to us its comparative inaccessibility (4) Others depict it as the only one that exists in order that we may all seek it, to the exclusion of everything else (5) Others represent it as the self of all so that it may be understood to be the source of all existence, knowledge and activity in the finite world. But confused heads, missing this central unity of Vedic teaching in and through a multiplicity of inter-connected approaches mar the unity of their teaching.

This is quintessence of *Vedānta*. The *Vedānta* teaches the majesty and grandeur of unity principle *vis-a-vis* multiplicity. We have to see the unity in multiplicity and under any circumstances we need not and should not deny the existence of the multiplicity in order to establish the existence of unity principle.

This *Tattva Vāda* is valid for all times and for all places.

Śrī Madhva has opened our eyes of wisdom by establishing this *Tattva Jñāna* as the central teaching of the *Vedānta*.



The Vedāntic Implication of Purañjanopākhyānam

—*Dr. V. V. B. Rama Rao*

ज्ञानादेव तु कैवल्यम्

Our Holy Scriptures contain in them the essence of the teaching of the *Vedas*. The *Vedas* are believed to be *Apauruṣeya* not of human creation. The complexities of wisdom therein are sought to be presented in parables, fables and allegories—mainly in narratives in the story mode to be brought to the reach of even the lay and the ordinary. The import and the deeper significance as distinct from the surface meaning is noteworthy.

The attempt to understand and appreciate the glory of the Supreme is central to all the *Purāṇas* and the scriptures and they give illustrations of people who succeeded in getting salvation. The *Vedas* are complex and the scriptures are in a way simplified texts to get at the complex through enlightening and gripping stories. The *Vedas* are the treasure house of both knowledge and its essential fruit, wisdom: knowledge of the eternal reality—of the five elements and the planets and so on and the wisdom tending towards the realization of the Supreme Bliss of being one with the Supreme Divine. The knowledge and the wisdom enshrined in the *Apauruṣeya Vedas* stood in need of exegesis and explanation. The large-hearted seers and sages churned them with a view to gathering the cream for the benefit of the ones who seek to know.

Some of the scriptures appear abstract to the mundane and earth-preoccupied minds, questioning intellects, tossed with doubt and thirsty of knowledge. For the common

multitudes Holy Scriptures like *Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā* attempt to deliver the essence of *Vedānta* through the medium of dialogue. *Srīmadbhāgavata* in a different way (like the *Purāṇas*) makes use of the story mode: which can be understood and enjoyed by the very common people.

The great seer Vyāsa (he is called *Vyāsabhagavān* also) envisioned *Śrīmadbhāgavata* with compassion for the unknowing, with concern for those on the path of knowing, with affection and reverence for the seekers. Every *Upākhyāna*, episode, in the *Bhāgavata* is replete with application of *Vedānta* to yield wisdom of the highest order for man.

Knowledge and Action (the Greeks called them Gnosis and Praxis) are important: when one irradiates the other, the fruit becomes worthy and valuable. Human life as seen and scanned by the seers is a means to an end. The end is to realize the individual self as part of the divine, as part of the Supreme Being. Innumerable stories, parables, allegories and fables are meant to be meaningful in the larger context of attaining the goal. Purañajana episode is one fine example.

There was once a king called Purañjana. He had a friend called Vijñāta. Purañjana went about in search of a suitable city for himself. At last he saw on the plains to the west of the Himalayas a city with nine gates. It struck him as beautiful. The houses there were built of various metals and had all amenities in them. Outside the city there was an extensive garden. In it was a maiden of rare beauty known as Pramadottamā. She had eleven servants waiting to do her commands. One of them was the leader. Everyone of them had a hundred maids each. There was a five-hooded serpent guarding the entrance of the orchard.

Purañjana was enchanted with her beauty. He enquired of her birth and parentage. He asked her as to who those in the retinue were. She replied that she did not know

anyone and that she had none of her own. She considered herself fortunate to have been seen by him and asked him to marry her if he chose to. He could stay with her happily in the city for a hundred years. They got married and entered the city. The city had seven gates above and two below. Among the above, five were to the east, one to the north and one to the south. There were two on the west. Following these gates Purañjana went about what his wife did, eating, drinking and singing. He was reduced to becoming a beast of pleasure. Once he went for a hunt and on his return found her tossing on the ground in grief unable to bear the pangs of separation. He consoled her and entreated her and on her insistence fell into an orgy of copulation. His youth got spent soon. He begot eleven hundred sons which took away half of his life-span. Then he begot a hundred and ten daughters. For every son of his he had a hundred grandsons when they were duly married. Purañjana became old. An enemy king, Caṇḍavega with his black and white followers numbering seven hundred and twenty alongwith their respective wives occupied Purañjana's kingdom and began ransacking it everyday.

Prajāgara, the president of the city attacked all the followers of Caṇḍavega single-handed and fought a war for a hundred years. Later Kālakanyā under the Yavana leaders Bhaya and Prajvara came and occupied the city guarded by the five-hooded serpent which became old and decrepit by then.

Purañjana was in deep grief: he lost all his riches and even his intellect and wisdom. His own children and grand children began to hate him. He could not stay in the city. He was held captive by Prajvara who began to burn the city. None of his progeny could come to his rescue. He was loath to leave his wife and children who he thought would not be able to live without him. With all his heart on his wife, he

breathed his last. For that reason he had to take rebirth as the daughter of the King of Vidarbha and came to be known as Vaidharbhī. Malayaketu married Vaidharbhī and performed many holy rites like *Yajñas* and good deeds. At ripe old age he retired to the forest and his faithful wife followed him there too. When he died his wife got into the pyre to resort to *Satī.* At that juncture a Brahmin appeared before her. When asked who he was he narrated to her how he and she had been together as two swans all along near *Mānasarovara.* When in his previous birth Purañjana took to a desire-spoiled woman he came to be in the present state. Since he thought of his wife at the time of death he had to be born as a woman. The Brahmin told his friend that there was no difference between them. Vaidharbhī then knew the reason for her rebirth.

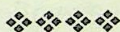
Vyāsa, the holy seer, himself explained the allegorical significance of this. Purañjana is the *Jīva,* of *Puruṣa Prakṛti. Avijñāta,* the one not clearly known, is *Ātman.* The city is the body with the nine offices, gates. *Prakṛti,* the cause of myness *(Ahaṁkāra)* and mineness *(Mamakāra)* alongwith intellect, *Buddhi* is the woman, Purañjanī. Her name is Pramadottamā the Tamasic quality engendered by desire, mineness and myness. The senses were her friends. They comprised the *Jñānendriyas,* the *Karmendriyas* and *Guṇas* with *Vṛttis* and their *Upavṛttis.* The five-hooded serpent is Life *(Prāṇa)* with five components: *Prāṇa, Apāna, Udāna, Vyāna* and *Samāna.* The eleven footmen are the ten *Indriyas* and their leader *Manas.* The nine gates are the nine offices in the human body. The five lands around them ate related to the five elements. Caṇḍavega is Time. Seven hundred and twenty are the days and nights (white and black) of the year which take longevity or the life span. The *Yavana* leader is Death. His followers are the perennial opposites. Prajvara is the one with extremes of heat and cold.

Vyāsa himself explaining the allegorical meaning in the text is very significant. He wanted to illustrate how subtle significance is put across through *Dhwani, Vyaṅgya* and allegory. Purañjana is one who is born for the body; *Jīva* takes birth owing to the *Vāsanās* of the earlier birth. *Jīva* is bound by the *Vāsanās*. Avijñāta is the *Ātmā* about which there is no definite and conclusive knowledge. Avijñāta is *Paramātmā* too. *Jīva* alongwith *Paramātmā* enters *Prakṛti*. Purañjana enters the city alongwith Vijñāta. His getting enamoured of Pramadottamā is *Buddhi* being drawn to 'myness' and 'mineness'. The Brahmin appearing to Vaidharbhī is *Jīvas* experiencing of *Paramātmā*. Vaidharbhī becoming Malayaketu's wife signifies the coming together of *Buddhi, Mamakāra* and *Ahaṁkāra. Yajña* is the knowledge of God: *Bhagavadjñāna*. This *Vāsanā* creates the experience of *Ātmā* in *Jīva* and helps one secure salvation by divine grace.

Sage Nārada (the one who gives knowledge, *Nāra* and *Da*) is a preceptor par excellence who teaches Prācīna Barhi. The great preceptor need not always be physically present or visible: he could be an experience an incident or just a mere intuition. Prācīna Barhi is a symbol of ancient *Dharma* the pervasive order which is pristine and perennial. Prācīna Barhi sticks to *Dharma*, which is none else than Vedic *Dharma*. For one such salvation is possible through gnosis *(Jñāna)*. This is what the preceptor teaches the seeker, the *Sādhaka*.

The bonds of birth can be broken only with good deeds and that is the way to experience Almighty, the Supreme Divine, the Absolute, God or what you call it. *Bhagavadvijñāna* alone can lead to salvation or *Mukti*. Action, *Satkarma*, good deeds alone cannot lead to salvation. Salvation comes only through *Jñāna*. Action thus becomes important both to get *Jñāna* and salvation. Nārada explains this at length to Prācīna Barhi: The hungry dog goes about from one door to another. When

it is fortunate enough it gets a morsel or two or else a beating with stick. In the same way the *Jīva* too does deeds and while doing good by sheer good fortune the baser desires may lead to some kind of renunciation and thereby lead to salvation. Or else because of *Saṅga,* attachment or *Vāsanās Jīva* may be led into the inexorable cycle of birth and death. A man carrying a heavy weight on his head may change it to his shoulder. This appears to give him some respite but he is carrying the same burden. It does not become any the lighter. In the same way the grief of a man consequent on his evil deeds may appear to abate by his doing good deeds. But the true fruit of action *(Karma)* only leads to further births if *Jñāna* is not acquired. Mere good deeds do not lead to salvation unless *Jñāna* emerges in between. Good deeds do not cancel the evil as grief in a dream becomes unreal on waking up. When action *(Karma)* is performed with *Saṅga,* attachment, it amounts to have been done with *Ajñāna* (ignorance) or *Māyā* (illusion). When *Jñāna* comes—either at the beginning, the middle or the end that becomes the cause of driving away of the *Vāsanās* and then only one is led to salvation. This is the import of *Purañajanopākhyāna.*



तस्मादग्निः समिधो यस्य सूर्यः
सोमात्पर्जन्य ओषधयः पृथिव्याम्।
पुमान् रेतः सिञ्चति योषितायां
बह्वीः प्रजाः पुरुषात्संप्रसूताः॥

"From Him emerges the fire (i.e., heaven) of which the fuel is the sun. From the moon emerges cloud, and (from cloud) the herbs and corns on the earth. A man sheds the semen into a woman. From the *Puruṣa* have originated many creatures."

—*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (II. 1. 5)

The Helping Hand of Śrī Madhvācārya

—*K. Ramachandra Rao*

From the beginning of time the vexed problem of mankind is his relationship with the world and of understanding the purpose of his life. There have been a long line of great thinkers who have given answers to this question. From time to time, nature or God whatever one may call it has sent mystics to make humanity understand these problems. There is no question of comparison among these great men. They came according to the needs of the time and according to the levels of understanding, as men were capable of at the time of their advent. Śrī Madhvācārya entered in the arena in the 13th century. He came after Śrī Śaṅkara and Śrī Rāmānuja. The philosophy of *Advaita* propounded by Śrī Śaṅkara posited that there is only one real entity and all else is illusion. Śrī Rāmānuja modified this view and said that the only one absolute entity transformed itself into many things, that is God made Himself into the world and into the souls. Śrī Madhva radically differed from these views. His system stands on the theory of one absolutely independent entity called God or Hari and all the other entities like the world and the souls entirely different from God but absolutely dependent on Him.

The word God has been too often and too loosely used by us without understanding properly its implication. We usually associate God with temples, *Pūjā* and rituals. We take God for granted and we use Him for our purposes according to our whims and fancies to grant us favours

or to ward off evils. It was Śrī Madhva who insisted that to understand God we must feel with all our strength in the depth of our hearts that we are dependent on Him. He said that God being separate, dwells in each and every soul and in inanimate matter entering into them and directing every phase of their existence. Śrī Madhva has given us an easy method to feel to know and associate with God though not fully but to a little extent according to our sincerity and honest *Sādhanā.* Man knows not God, but he knows that he is limited in every respect. He cannot choose his birth, his parents, his neighbours, his end etc. He is mostly a creature of the conditions and circumstances in which he is placed. A little reflection will convince us all that if we understand and appreciate this truth, it will be easier for us to have an approach to God. We know that we cannot get everything we want though we want everything badly. We also know that the world around us is being run on a system, plan and order over which we have no control or choice. A sincere introspection of these factors will enlighten us of the relationship between ourselves and the other entity which controls us.

It is necessary for every human being to appreciate this factor deeply and alone in his heart. Only this understanding will bring one nearer to God. Śrī Madhva says God is the highest value. Man usually goes by values. He wants the best of things. Now values are relative. One thing is more valuable than another.

We understand this clearly. Hence all through ages man has tried to have and possess the best of values. We want pleasure, riches, beauty etc., in this world. No doubt they are valuable. But is there anything more valuable than these things is the question we must ask ourselves. This requires in a certain sense an inward journey without which we will be engrossed in routine life of eating and sleeping and

minor pleasures. The hunger, the thirst the urge to pursue the search for the highest value will make man understand God better and better. It is possible for man to have a vision of God, though the vision may not be complete. God is infinite. Hence any concept or vision of God will be only imperfect. But it can go on being made more and more perfect in proportion to our efforts in this infinite journey. This is called spiritual journey. We should be grateful to Śrī Madhva for having given us an easy method to be in touch with God always by consciously and fully understanding and appreciating the truth that we are wholly dependent on Him. Our dependence itself is a boon to us. To be dependent on God is one side of the coin and the other side of the coin being the feeling that there is an independent God who is controlling and regulating our life here and hereafter in every possible way. A full grasp of this reality in each and everyone of our activities will mean a constant association with God. With a sense of our association with God there is no fear, anxiety or disappointment and the purpose of life is fulfilled by placing ourselves willingly under the dispensation in which God places us.

Let us not mistake for a moment that dependence means helplessness or inaction. What is required is an understanding that we are always under the perfect guidance and help and proximity of God and nothing can ever go wrong if we consciously submit to the irrefutable fact that God is looking after everything including prompting us to act in the right direction. Śrī Madhva says do your duty and enjoy life in remembrance of Him and you will be all right.



Vedānta—As it is

—K. D. Sanwal

Veda + Anta = Vedānta. Veda means knowledge and *Anta* means end. So the Sanskrit term *Vedānta* literally means—knowledge where it ends, or some may like to interpret it to mean end of knowledge. To some the interpretation may be still different. It does not however, make much of difference when we gradually go deeper into the subject matter. In fact 'knowledge' as such neither ends at any given point, nor ever has its limits. The apparent contradiction is not real.

Knowledge implied in the term *Vedānta* does not speak of knowledge in routine material sense or in any specific department, thereof. It is knowledge—all inclusive. Arts, science, and philosophy—all are within its fold. Each and every bit which helps to realise the ultimate truth, is within its scope. Just as all channels of water right from drains, rivulets and rivers, irrespective of their size and contents, ultimately flow into the sea, each and every bit of knowledge—no matter looking how so much tiny, triple and senseless is an inherent and integral components of the 'Knowledge' as a whole. Here it will not be out of point to quote—"ॐ पूर्णमद: पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते। पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते॥" These majestic lines basically intended to glorify the integral and perpetual status of the great Almighty, equally hold good in qualification of knowledge. After all 'Knowledge' as such is a sort of synonym for the same Supreme. We may seem to add to or abstract therefrom. But actually that is ever the same—Full and Eternal.

What is after all, the ultimate aim, goal, intention and

purpose or even meaning of *Vedānta,* with all its branches, schools of thought and subsidiaries etc? Perhaps, frankly speaking, *Vedānta* as such has no branches or classifications at all. It is an eternal and unbreakable total. It is we—the so-called devotees and *Sādhakas* in our pious search for and journey towards self-attainment, *Mukti* or *Mokṣa,* as we call it, tend to make and accept such distinctions and classifications. Those more scholarly and knowledgeable amongst the saints and devotees try to put forward their own experiences gained after decades of learning, study and penance. It is all, no doubt, with the good intention of showing some light and guidance to those following the path behind them. Different theories and isms like "द्वैत, अद्वैत, अहं ब्रह्मास्मि, मुक्ति, मोक्ष, निर्गुण ब्रह्म, सगुण ब्रह्म", the two forms of the same *Brahman*—Impersonal and Personal, are all such examples. Each and every theory has rightful meaning, background and implication as its respective place. One school of thought, for instance, seeks to merge forever within the Ultimate Reality or *Brahman.* Yet another seeks to attain the same stage of Realization, but does not wish to finally merge within.

Then again, there are differences about the very concept of *Brahman.* Broadly speaking there are two schools of thought one considers it as Absolute qualityless, self-existent, infinite etc. So to say 'निर्गुण'. The other speaks of *Brahman* as the creator, sustainer and controller so to say 'सगुण'.

According to Śaṅkara, the great scholar, exponent and authority on *Vedānta, Brahman* the Ultimate Reality endowed with infinite power called *Māyā,* creates, sustains and again reabsorbs the entire world. He clearly maintains that the homogenity, differencelessness and indeterminateness are not only the True Absolute *Brahma,* but it is also equally true that it manifests the whole cosmos through its inscrutable power. According to him, metaphysically, there is no distinction between *Īśvara* (ईश्वर) or God and

Brahman (ब्रह्म) or Absolute. Both are identical. The distinction between *Nirguṇa* and *Saguṇa Brahma* is really of the realization. The texts of *Śruti* (श्रुति) speak of both the two forms of *Brahman.* Of Absolute where it is realised as the very self or *Ātman* and of its personal form as something other than and different from our self or *Ātman.* Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahaṁsa clears the position from his spiritual experiences—"When I think of Supreme Being as inactive neither creating, preserving or destroying, I call Him *Brahman* or *Puruṣa.* When I think Him as active as creating, preserving or destroying, I call Him *Śakti,* or *Māyā* or *Prakṛti.* The distinction makes no ultimate difference. It is the same Being like diamond and its lustre."

The idea of Personal God or *Saguṇa Brahman* is practical and beneficial to the entire humanity. It satisfies the deepest yearnings of all religious people throughout the world. Devotion to Absolute is hard, whereas *Saguṇa* vision is easy.

All this is not a matter of mere logic and reasoning. Neither it is only a net result of holy scriptures and quotations contained in religious books of practically all religions throughout the world. No doubt all of them hint towards that—the Ultimate Truth. They are certainly good, useful and friendly indicators.

Now let us look to all the matter under study from an entirely different point of view. Let us take the Ultimate object first. To make our point very simple and understandable, we may take an example. There are some four or five persons. Each and every one of them is in quest of water. They are very thirsty. In their search they happen to meet each other at certain points. Every one is also anxious to know the cause of apparent worry and anxiety of the other. In the heart of heart everybody is even willing and ready to help the other if he can. But alas! none knows the language

of the other. One of them calls it water, the other *Pānī*, another *Āba* and the fourth *aqua* and so on. So, indifferent and unconcerned, everybody goes his/her own way, although everyone of them is in need and search of the same!

Yet another example. A bit different but very much similar too. They are four travellers. Their ultimate destination is one and the same—that lofty heavenly peak so high over the mountains. They climb their own way—one from the east, the other from the south, the third from the north and the fourth from the west. All the four are climbing the right way, although their paths are different. If we happen to get their respective narrations of experiences the versions will never be identical. They will be different in many respects. One will say the way is very rocky and dangerous. The other will describe it as full of green vegitation and jungles, and so on. Their narrations are correct and based on their actual experiences.

Vedānta, so to say, is a sort of immeasurable store of such experiences and narrations, even hearsays of the great seers, sages and scholars of every age, together with the holy books and scriptures of all religions of the world. It is not an ordinary store of knowledge. It is ever full. We seem to be taking out so much from this reservoir to satisfy our own thirst and quest for knowledge. It does not matter. It is full and infact as ever before. Many of us seem to be adding to it in shape of valuable pieces of experiences and advice. It does not overflow this way. Each and every bit is absorbed!

Sometimes *Vedānta* is supposed to be a subject matter very much above the level of an average and ordinary *Sādhaka* or seeker of Truth. If we really mean to say that *Vedānta* the knowledge culminating in perfection is one way of achieving the final goal of life, we are right. Otherwise it would have meant to completely block the

way of other aspirants, denying them the right to proceed their own way. It is 'a way', but not the only way, the *Gītā* speaks of three paths, viz., the path of knowledge, the path of devotion and the path of action. Realization can be achieved by pursuing anyone of these three, may be some more, paths. It must be noted that *Gītā* does not advocate either of these paths exclusively. It pleads for a harmonious integration or synthesis of them. Vivekānanda has echoed the same when he said—"The grandest idea in the religion of *Vedānta* is that we may reach the same goal by different paths.....But you must at the same time remember that these divisions are not very marked ones quite exclusive of each other. Each blends into the other. These divisions are made in accordance with the type or the tendency that may be seen to prevail in a man. We have found that in the end all these paths converge and become one."

The ideal of *Karmayoga* in the *Bhagavadgītā* is an admirable combination of knowledge, devotion and action. Knowledge is imperative. Action directed by knowledge leads to salvation. Knowledge leads action to right direction. But we must also note that knowledge never dawns without devotion and faith. The *Gītā* declares, "The man of faith, zeal and self-control attains knowledge. Having attained knowledge he immediately attains Supreme Peace."

Supreme Peace, Self-realisation, salvation, are the various names given to our Ultimate Aim. So long as we are proceeding with sincerity, devotion and determination in our sacred mission, it is alright. It does not matter whether we are moving slow or fast, in groups or singleness etc. If the destination is one and the same, will it matter whether we are proceeding on foot, in motor bus or even in an aeroplane? The conveyance is all a matter of chance, aptitude, availability etc. Neither can one claim that he travelling by plane will

get more of preference at destination. In this strange and pious journey, there are no first-class or second-class compartments or waiting-rooms at mid way stations or at the destination point. The taste of Heavenly Bliss, *Amṛta* or nectar, by whatever name we may call it, will render the same and similar pleasure to all alike.

There is an episode which goes like this—"Sitting over a mountain peak an ignorant shepherd was absorbed in his prayer to the Almighty saying, "Oh my *Khudā* (Lord), if you happen to come this way, I will serve you. I will comb your beard. I will pick out louses. I will let you bathe after rubbing oil on the body. I will surrender myself to you. I will rub your feet with my beard. If you will like to sleep, I will lay out the bed. If you fall ill, I will serve you night and day. Come to me, my good Lord! I will ever remain your slave!

Hazarata Mūsā was going that way. He asked the shepherd, "Oh fool! whom are you talking to? Which patient do you want to serve?"

Replied the shepherd, "I was talking to God. And I want to serve Him only.

Hazarata Mūsā scolded him. "Oh fool! You are doing a sin. Has ever God hairs? And does that Almighty ever get sick? Don't repeat such stupidity."

The poor shepherd became quiet. What else could he do except apologising to the great saint like Mūsā?

The next evening when Mūsā was in prayer, he overheard, "Mūsā, have I sent you to let the hearts of people be attached towards Me, or for detachment? That day the shepherd was deeply engrossed in Me. You have made a mistake by prohibiting him."

Was the shepherd not at the point of realization in his own humble way? Can it be discorded on the point of not being in tune and conformity with the so-called norms of conduct? When the very heart and soul of the aspirant gets

into direct contact with the grace, is there any more need or sense of worldly norms or any such media?

We mean realization. *Vedānta* too rectifies the same, throwing a lot of light on the subject. The various theories and doctrines advocated within that great subject are just pointers and explanations. Their presentation and propagation is meant just to make the whole theme more palatable and understandable to the learners. So long as our eyes are really fixed on the Ultimate Aim—Realization of Truth—we need not worry about the intermediary clogs and looking like barriers. In the form of various theories and conceptions, they are just meant to make our conviction all the more strong, easy and clear. Either due to lack in our own perception and understanding or may be, sometimes, on account of limitations and flaws in the very presentation and explanation of the concerned propositions, there seems to be a lot of confusion and misunderstanding. Things professed sometimes even look contradictory and unconciliatory. After all the great Almighty is beyond words and description. It is even beyond our mental understanding. There is no wonder, therefore, if either of these agencies sometime fail to convey the real meaning and message. As already said *Brahman, Paramātmā,* Supreme Truth or by whatever name we may like to call, it is ultimately a subject of realization more than anything else.

The whole theme can sometimes be better understood by tiny looking lines of couplets of great saints, sages and poets. Can't it be said, for example, about the remarkable lines of Kabīra—"कस्तूरी कुंडलि बसे, मृग ढूंढ़े बन माहिं। ऐसे घट-घट राम हैं, दुनियाँ देखत नाहिं॥" What a message of Reality in pure and simple words! Scriptures practically in all religions of the world are full of such gems. In a way, they are the creamy layers. But many a times our energy and attention are diverted and lost towards the secondary or superficial sort of outer layers. The different isms, doctrines and classifications are various

points of views. If any or more of them are really and conveniently acceptable to us, all the good. Else we are free to go our way. Sooner or later, all of us, if we are really sincere in our holy mission, are bound to reach the same summit, the same point. It is all Bliss. Not a dot of doubt, confusion or misunderstanding, neither any occasion or even time for trifles now. Nothing of that sort.

Walking, talking, writing or doing whatsoever, our physical organs are doing their job. So far as the inner soul is concerned, it is ever with the Supreme. This is the stage where all the roads were supposed to lead us to. The world with all its material structure is still before our eyes, as ever before. Perhaps looking like a little ball, from the high summit where we have been presently placed.

Nothing can dislodge us now. The so-called resources of power and pleasure like wealth, chair, sex and fame etc., seem to have lost their lustre and illusion. The curtain of *Māyā* has disappeared. If we have time enough to look back to the past, we will simply laugh at our follies. Due to utter ignorance, we had ourselves drawn lines of friends and foes, happiness and sorrow etc. These imaginary and irrelevant lines having gone off, it is all the same alround.

Vedānta certainly helps to reach this blissful stage of ease and immunity. *Vedānta* is not a one-sided notion. It is both a means as well as the end. Through its different theories and fountains of knowledge, it serves as a means. And by letting us know the Ultimate Knowledge and realization, it serves as a goal. True to its name, it is culmination and climax of knowledge. In other word emancipation. There is no contradiction at all!



The Upaniṣad Mantras
(For Daily Recitation)

—Jankinath Kaul 'Kamal'

The philosophy of *Advaita Vedānta* comes down to us from the *Upaniṣads*, expressly expounded by the secular and spiritual savant of humanity, Ādi Śaṅkarācārya and others in the line. It is this sublime philosophy that keeps the world-order in proper balance. The saviours have successfully tried to save the classic Indian civilization at least from its downfall. It is however, upto man to respond to their herculean efforts for his own good in general. In particular it is the individual effort of investigating and following spiritual practice by each one of us, that can bring about the realization of the true self. This can be accomplished in one, two or many births as the case may be.

To begin with, we must at least know this advanced scripture by reciting the text with ardent devotion or by listening to their recitation by adepts. Daily recitation ensures capability of understanding their deep and elevating meaning and bringing about a harmonious change in aspiring souls. The following *Mantras* are selected from the principal *Upaniṣads* to give the *Advaita Vedānta* philosophy in nutshell. Although it is very difficult to present such sublime philosophy through translation, when the language into which it is rendered differs so widely in form and in spirit from the original, yet there is no other way of conveying these truths to the common man in the present circumstances.

As knowledge of *Brahman* cannot be given through words, know that by practising with perfect faith, the *Yoga* of devotion and meditation. You cannot realize that by the

work done with motive (लोकैषणा) by progeny (पुत्रैषणा) and by amassing wealth (वित्तैषणा). Only the few attained immortality by renunciation.

यत्परं ब्रह्म सर्वात्मा विश्वस्यायतनं महत्।
सूक्ष्मात्सूक्ष्मतरं नित्यं तत्त्वमेव त्वमेव तत्॥

(*Kaivalyopaniṣad* I. 16)

"That which is the Supreme *Brahman,* the soul of all, the great support of the universe, subtler than the subtle and ever new, that is thyself and thou art that."

अणोरणीयान्महतो महीया-
नात्मास्य जन्तोर्निहितो गुहायाम्।
तमक्रतुः पश्यति वीतशोको
धातुप्रसादान्महिमानमात्मनः ॥

(*Kaṭhopaniṣad* I. 2.20)

"The eternal self that is subtler than the subtle and greater than the great, works through the heart of every creature. When, with purified sense-organs, one becomes desireless, one can understand the glory of the self and become free from sorrow."

नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो
न मेधया न बहुना श्रुतेन।
यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्य-
स्तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तनूं स्वाम्॥

(*Ibid.* I. 2.23)

"The self is not known through much study nor through intellect alone, nor through much listening to the *Śāstra.* To whomever the self chooses to bless, by him alone can it be known. To that seeker the true self reveals itself completely."

नाविरतो दुश्चरितान्नाशान्तो नासमाहितः।
नाशान्तमानसो वापि प्रज्ञानेनैनमाप्नुयात्॥

(*Ibid.* I. 2.24)

"One can realize the self through real knowledge, if one desists from bad conduct, if not inquiet, if one's senses

are not uncontrolled and if one's mind is not unfree from anxiety."

अग्निर्यथैको भुवनं प्रविष्टो रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बभूव।
एकस्तथा सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बहिश्च॥

(*Ibid.* II. 2.9)

"Just as fire, though one yet entering the world, becomes multiformed, assuming respective shapes of different fuels; similarly, the self though one inside all beings, yet assumes form in respect of each shape as it is outside."

वायुर्यथैको भुवनं प्रविष्टो रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बभूव।
एकस्तथा सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बहिश्च॥

(*Ibid.* II. 2.10)

"Just as wind, though one yet entering the world, becomes multiformed assuming respective shapes; similarly the self, though one yet assumes form in respect of each shape as it is outside."

एको वशी सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा एकं रूपं बहुधा यः करोति।
तमात्मस्थं येऽनुपश्यन्ति धीरास्तेषां सुखं शाश्वतं नेतरेषाम्॥

(*Ibid.* II. 2.12)

"Eternal peace is for those who are discriminating and who, in their heart realize Him who, being one, the controller and inner self of all, becomes multifarious. Others cannot have this peace, this joy."

नित्यो नित्यानां चेतनश्चेतनाना-
मेको बहूनां यो विदधाति कामान्।
तमात्मस्थं येऽनुपश्यन्ति धीरा-
स्तेषां शान्तिः शाश्वती नेतरेषाम्॥

(*Ibid.* II. 2.13)

"Eternal peace is for those whose discriminating power is stable and who, in their heart, realize Him who, being eternal among all eternals and pure consciousness among the conscious, alone dispenses desired objects to many. Such peace is not for others."

न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं
नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोऽयमग्निः।
तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं
तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति॥

(*Ibid.* II. 2.15)

"There the sun does not shine, neither the moon nor the stars. This flash of lightning does not shine there, not to speak of this fire. He shining all this shines, through His lustre all this world gets illumined variously."

Prayer for peace—

असतो मा सद्गमय। तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय। मृत्योर्माऽमृतं गमय।

"O Lord! Lead me from unreal to real, from darkness to light and from mortality to immortality."

ॐ सह नाववतु। सह नौ भुनक्तु। सह वीर्यं करवावहै।
तेजस्वि नावधीतमस्तु। मा विद्विषावहै। ॐ शान्तिः! शान्तिः!! शान्तिः !!!

"May He protect us both (preceptor and disciple) by revealing true knowledge."
May He bestow upon us the desired practical knowledge of the self;
May we gain spiritual strength together.
May our study be invigorating.
May we not be inimical to each other.
Aum Peace! Peace! Peace!

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते।
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते॥
ॐ शान्तिः! शान्तिः!! शान्तिः!!!

That Supreme *Brahman* is infinite;
This conditioned *Brahman* (manifestation) is infinite;
This infinite proceeds from that infinite;
Through knowledge, minussing this
Infinite from that infinite,
The infinite, unconditioned Supreme *Brahman,*
Alone remains eternal.
Aum Peace be from all the three calamities individual, social and natural.



Vedānta of Śrī Ramana Maharṣi

—*G. V. Narayana Rao*

A good number of sages, including Ādi Śaṅkara wrote most valuable commentaries on *Vedānta.* Various *Upaniṣads* speak volumes on this vast subject. Śrī Rāma Kṛṣṇa Paramahaṁsa, Swāmī Vivekānanda, Swāmī Raṅganāthānanda etc., gave their *Bhāṣyams* (commentaries) elaborately. The *Gospel of Śrī Ramana Maharṣi* wins over the heart of a common person in the simplest and direct way. While the sage was very young he experienced the Pangs of Death *(Mṛtyu)* in his native place, near Madurai in Tamilnadu. In a desperate mood of unattachment, he left suddenly for Tiruvannamalai, the abode of Arunachala Śiva, a pilgrim centre. He was in pursuit of *Jñāna* (spiritual knowledge), He did hard penance to ascertain the mysterious secret of human existence and survival. His keen and deep search for knowledge was akin to Siddhārtha who later on acquired spiritual knowledge at Gaya and later on became Buddha Bhagawān.

He was *Jitendriya* of unparalleled type. After brooding over the mystery of the universe, Śrī Ramana came to the firm conclusion that physical body is perishable. But the *Ātmā* which all of us feel as 'I' is eternal. The element 'I' (inner-self) is not perishable. Biological part is quite distinct from 'I', in respect of all living (animate) beings.

Śrī Ramana went into penance for more than two decades in Tiruvannamalai. He achieved *Jñāna* in spiritualism. His entire theme surrounds on the central point "who am I". The *Maharṣi* lived on getting *Bhikṣā,* from the local

residents. He lived in the caves of the adjoining Arunachala hill. Later on, an *Āśramam,* known as *Śrī Ramana Āśramam* came up at the bottom of the hill. It rose up to great prominence.

The *Maharṣi* lived in a very simple way with a small loin cloth, like Mahātmā Gāndhī. For most part of the day, he lived in *Maunam* (absolute silence). When his devotees or critics asked any relevant or irrelevant questions, the *Maharṣi* very patiently answered them on small chits. Some times, he gave vocal answers too. The strangest feature was that the questioners could get suitable answers through the *Maharṣis Maunam* itself (silence). They automatically became mum, figuratively (speechless), being fully satisfied and returned home very happily. Such was the magnificent and radiant spiritual power of the great *Maharṣi.*

Śrī Ramana preached that, by realising self (I), by per'orming meditation, *Pūjā* or *Arcanā,* one could achieve *Mokṣa.*

The spiritual rituals can be performed, even after taking food—not necessary that the rites should be done only with empty stomach. If food is taken, the inner-self *(Ātmā Rāma)* also known as (I) is satisfied. The place of worship also is immaterial—Anywhere meditation could be performed. Age, sex, place, religion, caste is immaterial for worship and meditation.

Śrī Ramana always prayed to Arunachala—Śiva, in absolute silence. He was an embodiment of great compassion. Daily he performed *Giri-Pradakṣiṇam* (circumambulation) of Arunachala hill, alongwith his followers. He saw Bhagawān Śiva in the form of that hill. He invoked Lord Aruṇācala Śiva, in his famous *Akṣara-Maṇi-Mālā* (authored by the sage himself in Tamil). The Tamil poems were translated into Telugu verses by his ardent devotee, late Śrī Griddalwi Lakṣmī Nārasimham Gāru.

In the *Akṣara-Maṇi-Mālā,* the *Maharṣi* invoked Aruṇācala Śiva, as his bridegroom, and himself as his favourite bride. One gets deeply immersed in great devotion, while reading these poems, invoking Bhagawān Aruṇācalam Śiva, in the form of a "beautiful hill", on top of which *Kārtika Akhaṇḍa Dīpam* is lighted with pure abundant ghee, annually. It becomes a light house of Tiruvanavelli Town.

Śrī Ramana Maharṣi, wrote a good number of books, on his central theme "Who am I". Many scholars, Vedic pundits, foreigners are attracted by *Śrī Ramana Tattva* which is the essence of Vedic Scriptures, *Bhagawad Gītā* and *Upaniṣads. Śrī Ramana Tattva* is explained in a language of commoners. It is implemented in the *Āśramam,* in the easiest manner, most devotionally. Many hundreds of devotees visit the *Āśramam* daily. They are freely fed with both tiffins and meals.

Śrī Ramana Maharṣi was born on 26-12-1879. He attained *Nirvāṇam* on 14-04-1950.



अपाणिपादो जवनो ग्रहीता
पश्यत्यचक्षुः स शृणोत्यकर्णः।
स वेत्ति वेद्यं न च तस्यास्ति वेत्ता
तमाहुरग्र्यं पुरुषं महान्तम्॥

"He is without hands and feet, (and yet) moves and grasps; He sees, (though) without eyes; He hears, (though) without ears. He knows whatever is to be known, and of Him there is no knower. They speak of Him as the first *Puruṣa,* and the great."

—*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (III.19)

Theological Outlook of Rāmānuja

—*R. Narasimhan*

God created man to get himself redeemed and liberated from the cycle of births and deaths. This object can be achieved by acquiring knowledge of the Self (soul) and its nature and of the *Brahman* (God) and the relationship between these two. *Vedānta* helps us in the study of the true nature of *Jīvātmā* and *Paramātmā* and of the means of liberation *(Mokṣa).* It satisfies our thirst for spiritualism and leads to Godhood. It is indeed the light of life. We all know that human life is limited. The things that we are to know are endless in this short span of life and there are too many obstacles that stand in the way of God-realisation. Yet we should try to make use of our lives in knowing the essence of our holy books. This is revealed in the following famous verses—

(1) अनन्तपारं बहुवेदितव्यं स्वल्पास्तथायुर्बहवो हि विघ्नाः ।
यत्सारभूतं तदुपासितव्यं हंसो यथा क्षीरमिबाम्बुमिश्रम् ॥

(2) असारं अल्पसारं च सारं सारतरंत्यजेत् ।
भजेत् सारतमं शास्त्रे रत्नाकरमिवामृतम् ॥

By the utmost mercy of God and due to the virtues of our earlier births, we have been privileged to be born as human beings. So we should make use of this precious life in crossing the ocean of *Saṁsāra*. Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara had rightly pointed out that "दुर्लभं.....मनुष्यत्वं, मुमुक्षुत्वं, महापुरुषसंश्रयम्". This could be achieved with the guidance of a spiritual *Guru,* who could lead us towards God-realization.

Our country is sacred in that God incarnated in this

land in different forms from time to time. The gospel of *Vedānta* was proclaimed by the Lord Himself in the form of *Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā.* The essence of *Vedas* is contained in this book of 'प्रस्थान त्रय' and it is being called 'श्रीगीतोपनिषद्'. In this holy text it has been well explained by the Lord that essentially all things fall under three distinct categories viz., 'क्षर, अक्षर' and 'पुरुषोत्तम' which are classified by the Vaishnavite *Ācāryas* as 'अचेतन, चेतन' and 'ईश्वर' *Tattvas.* All inanimate objects can be termed as 'अचेतन' or 'जड' and living bodies are called 'चेतन' or 'जीवात्मा' and above all there is the Supreme being called the 'ईश्वर' or 'परमात्मा'. A study of this holy text reveals the knowledge and nature of the above and the glory of God and human limitations and the ways and means of God-realization. The ultimate solution of obtaining 'मोक्ष' (liberation) has been indicated in the *Gītā* (in the 'चरमश्लोक') which everybody is aware of—

सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज।
अहं त्वा सर्व पापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः॥

This is the 'अभय प्रदान' provided by God to those who surrender at His feet.

The Divine messages are contained in our spiritual texts like 'श्रुति, स्मृति, इतिहास, पुराण' etc., and the Lord Himself has declared that "श्रुतिस्मृतिर्ममैवाज्ञा" though it is very difficult to obtain knowledge direct from them. The Divine message is spread to the masses through our spiritual teachers, *Gurus* and *Ācāryas.* Thus the *Guru Paramparā* has come into being.

Among the Śrī Vaishnavite *Ācāryas,* the role of Śrī Bhagavat Rāmānuja is very significant and important too. He is considered to be 'शेषावतार' (an *Avatāra* of Ādi Śeṣa) and is reverently remembered as 'श्रीलक्ष्मणमुनि' and 'यतिराज'. At a time when the people needed a proper spiritual guide, it was God's supreme mercy this *Avatāra* took place in the southern part of the country near Kanchipuram (Śrī Perumpudur) about one thousand years ago. He

propagated the philosophy called *Viśiṣṭādvaita* which was followed by earlier *Śrī Vaiṣṇava Ācāryas*. He was very benevolent and kind to one and all and showed keen interest in the uplift of the humanity as a whole. Though born rich he sacrificed everything and took asceticism at a time when the Vaishnavite world wanted a spiritual *Guru* after the demise of Śrī Yāmunācārya. He mastered both the Sanskrit and Tamil texts of religion from five masters and himself became a Master of *Vedānta Śāstras*. It was God's will that he should write a commentary on Śrī Veda Vyāsa's *Brahma Sūtras* which was named as *Śrī Bhāṣyam*.

The teachings contained in *Śrī Bhāṣyam* can only be understood with the help of an *Ācārya* through a daily study called 'कालक्षेप'. This *magnum opus* is also called a 'शारीरक शास्त्र' as well as 'श्रीरामानुज दर्शन'.

According to Śrī Rāmānuja, one should clearly understand the differences between the three *Tattvas* (चेतन, अचेतन and ईश्वर). Under *Cetana Tattva* come all *Jīvātmās* (who themselves are further classified as 'बद्ध, मुक्त' and 'नित्य'. Those who are devoted to God and do service at His abode 'श्रीवैकुण्ठ' at all times are called 'नित्य' or 'नित्य सूरि'. The liberated souls are 'मुक्त' and all others are classified as 'बद्धजीव'. The *Acetana Tattva* comprises of 'प्रकृति, काल' and 'शुद्ध सत्त्व'. The three *Guṇas* come under 'प्रकृति' which causes the creation of the world and the time factor is 'काल तत्त्व' and all objects in 'परमात्मा's abode are called 'शुद्धसत्त्व' including His own body. Śrī Rāmānuja has established that both the 'चेतन' and 'अचेतन तत्त्व' form the Divine Body (शरीर) of *Śrī Paramātmā Śrīman Nārāyaṇa* and hence his doctrine is called a 'शारीरक शास्त्र'. Just as the soul in our body is different and yet deemed to be identified as one with the body, so also the sentinel (चेतन) and non-sentinel (अचेतन) objects form the body of the 'परमपुरुष'. The part cannot become the whole—so declared Śrī Rāmānuja. So there are certain

items of differences and similarities in certain other items between (परमात्मा) and 'जीवात्मा'.

Both are eternal, true and enjoy happiness, but the 'परमात्मा' is 'सत्यकाम, सत्यसंकल्प' and 'विभु' besides being a 'श्रियः पतिः'. The 'जीवात्मा' is the smallest of the small elements and is always subordinate to the Lord ('परतन्त्र' and 'पराधीन' and not 'स्वतन्त्र'). He is deemed to be a 'शेष, दास' or *Aṅga* of the Lord who is a 'शेषी' Master 'स्वामी' and 'अङ्गी'. The *Swarūpa* of *Jīvātmā* is to do service to the Lord in this world as well as in 'परमपद' (the abode of the Lord) with a 'दिव्य शरीर'.

Śrī Rāmānuja propagated the doctrine of surrender (शरणागति) which is the easiest way of obtaining 'मोक्ष'. In *Kaliyuga*, it is very difficult to practise the 'अष्टाङ्गयोग'. The total surrender to the Lord (being helpless and poor i.e., 'अनन्यगति' and 'अकिञ्चनत्व'), when done once only pleases God and makes Him grant liberation at the end of the body. This is ensured by the Lord's declaration in the holy texts such as—

अनृतं नोक्तपूर्वं मे न च वक्ष्ये कदाचन।
....रामो द्विर्नाभिभाषते॥

सकृदेव प्रपन्नाय तवास्मीति च याचते।
अभयं सर्वभूतेभ्यो ददाम्येद्व्रतं मम॥
सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज।
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः॥

(Quotations from 'श्रीशरणागति गद्य' of Śrī Rāmānuja)

Besides his *magnum opus Śrī Bhāṣyam,* Śrī Rāmānuja wrote eight other *Vedāntic* books containing the *Vedāntic* truths. These are 'वेदान्तसार, वेदान्तदीप, श्रीगीताभाष्यम्, श्रीशरणागतिगद्यम्, श्रीरंगगद्यम्, श्रीवैकुण्ठगद्यम्, नित्यग्रंथम्', and 'वेदार्थसंग्रहम्'. He himself performed 'शरणागति' at the feet of Lord Śrī Raṅganātha of Sriraṅgam and worshipped the Divine couple in the month of *Phālguna* on 'उत्तराफाल्गुनी नक्षत्र' which is even now being celebrated every year and is very significant to all devotees. It is believed that the Lord not only granted 'मोक्ष' to him but to all those who followed Śrī Rāmānuja.

Our miseries are caused mainly due to 'अहंकार' and 'ममकार' as well as 'स्वतन्त्रात्मभ्रम' and 'देहात्मभ्रम'. He had advised that one should perform his duty in the name of God, for the sake of God, and consider the doer as God Himself (This is called 'सात्त्विक त्याग'). One should not think that he is free as he is otherwise 'परतन्त्र' and a tool in the hands of God. The 'स्वरूप' of 'जीवात्मा' is always to engage himself in the service of God (i.e., सर्वदेश, सर्वकाल and सर्वावस्थ). Further the 'देहात्मभ्रम' should be done away with as the body is entirely different from the eternal soul that exists in it. The body is perishable while the 'आत्मा' is eternal (नित्य and सत्य). 'आत्मा' changes body just as we change our old shirts. This is also the truth explained in 'श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता'.

By going against the wishes of God (as ordained in our holy books) we are to face the wrath of God and are being punished (निग्रह). We should do such things only which are prescribed in *Śāstras* with great faith in God. This is the only way to God-realization.

He was so kind and benevolent that he spelt out his teachings from the top of the temple tower at Thiru. Goshtiyur (near Karaikudi in Tamil Nadu). The true and inner meanings of 'अष्टाक्षर द्वय' and 'चरमश्लोक' which are otherwise called the 'रहस्यत्रय' should be understood and these form the 'सार' of all of his religious books.

प्रणामं लक्ष्मणमुनिः प्रतिगृह्णातु मामकम् ।
प्रसादयति यत्सूक्तिः स्वाधीनपतिकां श्रुतिम् ॥



अपुनर्जन्मने यः स्याद्बोधः स ज्ञानशब्दभाक् ।
वसनाशनदा शेष व्यवस्था शिल्पजीविका ॥

"That which enables a person for emancipation is the real knowledge. The other branches of learning which are confined to earn food and clothings are only the crafts for livelihood."

—*Yogavāsiṣṭha*

Non-attachment

It is evidently clear that each one is pure from the stand-point of his Real Self. He is unvitiated. As a result of crimes committed by the body or mind, the Self *(Ātmā)* is not to be held liable. A water duck does not get drenched whether it lives in a dirty pool or in the Gaṅgā water. Likewise, the soul, the *Ātmā* whether enshrined in a body with a pure or impure mind, remains ever pure and unaffected.

—*Quotation from Śaṅkarācārya*

"The sun cannot be affected at all, whether its reflection falls in the Gaṅgā water or in the drain water; in a gold vessel or in an earthen pot. The reflection of the sun will be all alike. In the same way, why should one have misgivings about the Primal Soul which is embodiment of eternal Bliss and unbounded sea of knowledge? Why should we discriminate between a Brahmin and a lowcaste sweeper."

—*Śaṅkara Mahīśa Pañcaka Stotra*

The sun neither gets more sanctified, when its reflection falls in the Gaṅgā water, nor it gets polluted when it falls in wine. By the same analogy, the Soul (one's Real Self) is not contaminated, when its body and mind are debased, nor is it in any way further evolved or enlightened by the skilful development of the same.

—*Swami Rama Tirtha*

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Ātmā

अशरीरो वायुरभ्रं विद्युत्स्तनयित्नुरशरीराण्येतानि तद्यथैतान्यमुष्मादाकाशात्समुत्थाय परं ज्योतिरुपसम्पद्य स्वेन रूपेणाभिनिष्पद्यन्ते ॥

"Air has no body, light, cloud, lightning, and thunder—these are bodiless. As these, having sprung up from that sky and having reached the supreme light (of the sun), become established in their own forms."

एवमेवैष सम्प्रसादोऽस्माच्छरीरात्समुत्थाय परं ज्योतिरुपसम्पद्य स्वेन रूपेणाभिनिष्पद्यते स उत्तमः पुरुषः स तत्र पर्यैति जक्षत्क्रीडन्रममाणः स्त्रीभिर्वा यानैर्वा ज्ञातिभिर्वा नोपजनःस्मरन्निदःशरीरः स यथा प्रयोग्य आचरणे युक्त एवमेवायमस्मिञ्छरीरे प्राणो युक्तः ॥

"In this very way, this tranquil one becomes established in his own nature after rising up from this body and reaching the Supreme Light. He is the Supreme Person. There he moves about laughing, sporting, and enjoying with women, vehicles, or kinsmen, but not remembering this body born from the contact of man and woman. That is, just as a horse is harnessed to a vehicle, in that very way this individual soul is joined with this body."

—*Chāndogyopaniṣad* (VIII. 12. 2-3)